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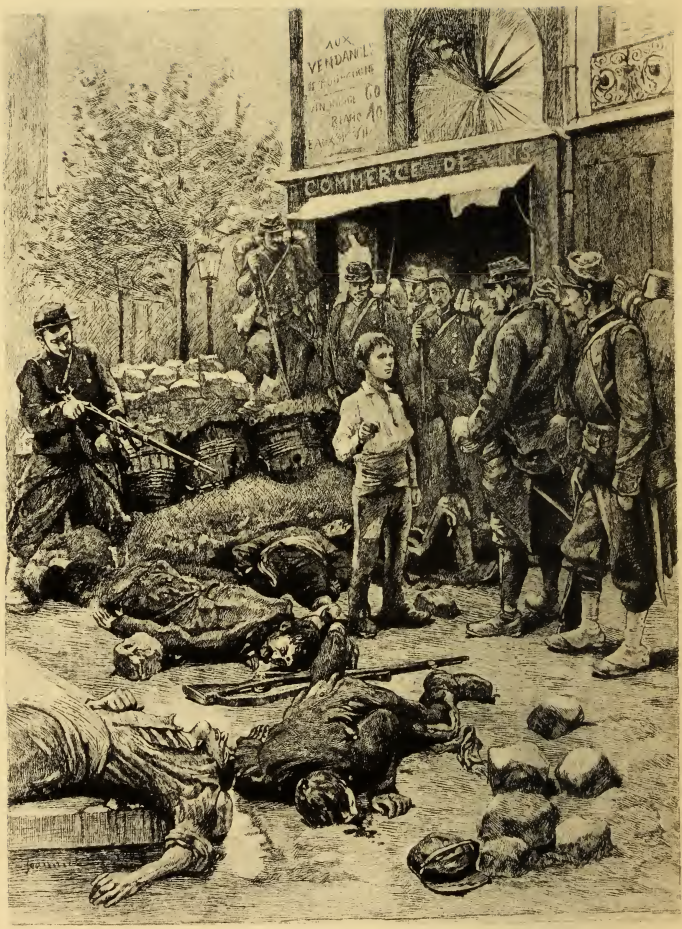
COMMERCE DE

THE WORKS

OF

VICTOR HUGO

IN TWENTY-FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME XXI

POEMS

VOL. III

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

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LES CHÂTIMENTS

1853

LES CHÂTIMENTS

INDIGNATION!

Toi qu'aimait Juvénal

Thou who loved Juvenal, and filed
His style so sharp to scar imperial brows,
And lent the lustre lightening
The gloom in Dante's murky verse that flows —
Muse Indignation! haste, and help
My building up before this roseate realm,
And its so fruitless victories,
Whence transient shame Right's prophets overwhelm,
So many pillories, deserved!
That eyes to come will pry without avail,
Upon the wood impenetrant,
And spy no glimmer of its tarnished tale.

THE EXILE'S VOICE

France à l'heure où tu te prosternes

France! at the hour when thou bow'st down,
The tyrant's foot upon thy head!
A voice shall ring from caverns brown,
At which the chained joy-tears shall shed.

An exile standing on the shore,
And looking at the star and wave,

Shall speak as prophets spake of yore,
Whom God a fearless puissance gave.

And then, his menaces of might,
Lightnings from east to west unrolled,
Shall pass athwart the sullen night,
Like glaives that unseen fingers hold.

Tremble, O mountain, to thy breast,
Deep-veined with marble, towering high!
Shiver, O tree with lofty crest,
To hear the words when they whirl by.

They'll have the trumpet's lofty sound.
The shriek that makes the ravens cower,
The still small breath, on graveyard mound,
That stirs the humble grass and flower.

"Shame to the Tyrant!" they shall shout,
"Shame to the vile, vile homicide!"
And weakest souls shall round about
Gather like warriors brave and tried.

Upon the race transforming now
The words shall like a storm-cloud wheel,
And if the living hide their brow,
The dead shall wake with fire and steel.

THE FOURTH OF DECEMBER, 1851

Jouissez du repos que vous donne le maître

Have, now, fruition of your prince's gift — repose.
Once you had hearts, it may be, sensible of woes,
Haunted by dreams of bliss;

Error distracted you — envy or hate or strife;
Your lips, whence yester-eve issued the breath of life,
Opened to cheer or hiss.

Faces that one another hurriedly might greet,
You came and went in multitudes along the street,
Having no fixed abode;
Restless as water that winds onward through the plains,
Moving at random all, enduring the same pains,
Travelling the self-same road.

There was a fire, perchance, blazed in your brain of man,
A hope, a scheme to crush him of the Vatican,
Him of the Elysée,
And spread the spirit of liberty from pole to pole;
For nations are volcanoes, and a flame each soul
In this our burning day.

Haply you loved; your hearts were taken in the net.
At eventide, a prey to many a sharp regret,
To many a vain affright,
You felt a thousand impulses within you stir;
Even as the ocean feels its waves move livelier
While heaven around is bright.

And whatsoe'er you were, ardent or stern or wise,
Whether the fires of youth were sparkling in your eyes,
Or age had bowed your forms,
Whether your lot were mourning, mirth or mystery,
Sorrow was yours to feel with all its agony,
And love with all its storms.

Thanks to the Fourth December, freed from care,
to-day
Stretched at full length you lie, deep in the ice-cold
clay,
Wrapt in the all-shrouding fleece.
Ye Dead! the grass grows noiseless o'er your cata-
combs.
Sleep in your coffin-shells — keep silence in your
tombs!
Is not the Empire peace?

THE MASS OF THE FIRST OF JANUARY 1852

Prêtre, ta messe, écho des feux de peloton

The fusillade finds cadence in a psalm.
Thy masses, Priest, are sins.
Death, with his chin upon his bony palm,
Behind thee squats, and grins.

Angels and virgins shudder at the sight
In heaven whence we came,
When bishops take the linstock-match, to light
The altar-taper's flame.

Thou covetest a salary and a seat,
In this new Turk's divan;
Take it; yet wait, till they have sluiced the street,
Before thou bless thy man.

Glory to Gessler! Death to William Tell!
The organ gasps and groans.
Slabs they have taken from the morgue may well
Serve thee for altar-stones.

"We laud thee, God, for thy omnipotence,
Mighty"— thou say'st — "to save;"
And a stench mingles with thy frankincense
Out of the half-closed grave.

Slaughtered by night, and slaughtered at mid-day,
Men, women, babes expire;
A vulture, not an eagle, wings his way
To thy cathedral spire.

Pray for the felon, whom thou honourest —
(Martyrs, you hear the prayer!)
On high God sees thee, and thy blessings, priest,
Are turned to curses there.

The huddled convicts, hurried o'er the wave
To Algiers, to Cayenne,
From Bonaparte in Paris turn — to brave
The tiger in his den.

Exile has reaped the craftsmen and the poor,
Peasants from labour reft;
So be it; but look to thy right hand, Sibour!
Look, Bishop, to thy left!

Thy deacon is Treason, Fraud thy acolyte;
Thy God, thy soul is sold.
Put on thy mitre and thy alb of white!
Sing, perjured priest and old!

Murder attends thee in the rite divine,
Firing on those who fled.
Satan stands server; and it was not wine
Stained thy ciborium red.

ART AND THE PEOPLE

L'art, c'est la gloire et la joie

I.

Art, 'tis a glory, a delight;
I' the tempest it holds fire-flight,
  It irradiates the deep blue sky.
Art, splendour infinite,
On the brow of the People doth sit,
  As a star in God's heaven most high.

Art, 'tis a broad-flowered plain,
Where Peace holds belovèd reign;
  'Tis the passionate unison
Of music the city hath made
With the country, the man with the maid,
  All sweet songs made perfect in one!

Art, 'tis Humanity's thought,
Which shatters chains century-wrought!
  Art, 'tis the conqueror sweet!
Unto Art, each world-river, each sea!
Slave People, 'tis Art makes free;
  Free People, 'tis Art makes great!

II.

O chivalrous France, without cease
Chant loudly thy hymn of peace,—
  Chant, with eyes fixed on the sky!
Thy joyous voice and profound
Through the slumbering world doth resound . . .
  O noble People, chant high!

True People, chant gladly the dawn!
At even raise song as at morn!
  After labour sweet singing should be.
Laugh for the century o'erthrown!
Sing love in a tender tone,
  And loudlier chant Liberty!

Chant Italy sacred and sweet,
Poor Poland, slain sons at her feet,
  Naples, whose heart-blood outpours,
Hungary, the Russian's base vaunt. . .
O tyrants! the People doth chant
  Even as the lion roars!

IMPERIAL REVELS

Courtisans! attablés dans la splendide orgie

Cheer, courtiers! round the banquet spread —
  The board that groans with shame and plate,
Still fawning to the sham-crowned head
  That hopes front brazen turneth fate!
Drink till the comer last is full,
And never hear in revels' lull,
Grim Vengeance forging arrows fleet,
    Whilst I gnaw at the crust
    Of exile in the dust —
But Honour makes it sweet!

Ye cheaters in the tricksters' fane,
  Who dupe yourself and trickster-chief,
In blazing cafés spend the gain,
  But draw the blind, lest at *his* thief
Some fresh-made beggar gives a glance
And interrupts with steel the dance!

But let him toilsomely tramp by,
As I myself afar
Follow no gilded car
In ways of Honesty.

Ye troopers who shot mothers down,
And marshals whose brave cannonade
Broke infant arms and split the stone
Where slumbered age and guileless maid —
Though blood is in the cup you fill,
Pretend it "rosy" wine, and still
Hail Cannon "King!" and Steel the "Queen!"
But I prefer to sup
From Philip Sidney's cup —
True soldier's draught serene.

Oh, workmen, seen by me sublime,
When from the tyrant wrenched ye peace,
Can you be dazed by tinselled crime,
And spy no wolf beneath the fleece?
Build palaces where Fortunes feast,
And bear your loads like well-trained beast,
Though once such masters you made flee!
But then, like me, you ate
Food of a blessed fête —
The bread of Liberty!

CHANSON

La femelle! elle est morte

The female? She is dead.
The male? The cat has fed
On his flesh and his bone.

To the nest which will come?
Oh, poor birdlings, be dumb!
But they moan, the weak things, and they moan.

The shepherd? Gone or fled.
The dog? Killed, and instead
The wolf prowling alone.
He peers in,— Ho, I come!
He may pity, hope some:
Oh, poor lambs, the wolf's heart is of stone.

The man? To prison led.
The mother? Sick a-bed
In a workhouse is thrown.
It is cold — will she come?
They cry — cry for a crumb,
Poor children! And no mercy is shown.

A SOUVENIR OF THE NIGHT OF THE FOURTH

L'enfant avait reçu deux balles dans la tête

The child had received two balls in the head,
But his bosom still throbbed; he was not dead;
The house was humble, peaceable and clean,
A portrait on the wall — beneath was seen
A branch blessed by the priest, for good luck kept;
An old grandmother sat quiet and wept.
We undrest him in silence. His pale lips
Oped; Death on his eye cast fiercest its eclipse;
His arms hung down; he seemed in a trance;
A top fell out from his pocket by chance;
The holes of his wounds seemed made by a wedge:
Have you seen mulberries bleed in a hedge?

His skull was open like wood that is split;
The grandmother looked on, at us, and it.
"God! How white he is — bring hither the lamp,"
She said at last, "and how his temples are damp!
And how his poor hair is glued to his brow!"
And on her knee she took him — undrest now.
The night was dreary; random shots were heard
In the street; death's work went on undeterred.
"We must bury the child," whispered our men.
And they took a white sheet from the press; then,
Still unconscious of the death of her boy,
The grandmother brought him, her only joy,
Close, close to the hearth, in hopes that the fire
His stiffening limbs with warmth would inspire.
Alas! When death touches with hands ice-chill
Nothing again can warm, do what we will.
She bent her head, drew off the socks, and took
The naked feet in hands withered that shook.
Ah! Was not that a sight our hearts to tear!
Said she, "Sir, he was not eight; and so fair!
His masters — he went to school — were content;
He wrote all my letters, on errands went
When I had need; and are they going now
To kill poor children? The brigands allow
Such to pass free. Are they brigands? Or worse?
A Government! 'Tis a scourge and a curse!
He was playing this morn, alert and gay,
There by that window, in the sun's bright ray,
Why did they kill the poor thing, at his play?
He passed on to the street; was that a crime?
They fired on him straight; they wasted no time.
Sir, he was good and sweet as an angel.
Ah! I am old; by the blessed Evangel
I should have left the sad earth with light heart,
If it would have pleased Monsieur Bonaparte

To kill me instead of this orphan child!"
She stopped, sobs choked her, then went on more wild,
While all wept around, e'en hearts made of stone —
"What's to become of me, left now alone?
Oh! Tell me this, for my senses get dim —
His mother left me one child,— only him.
Why did they kill him,— I would know it,— why?
Long live the Republic, he did not cry,
When that shout, like a wave, came rolling high."
We stood silent, heads low, hearts full of grief,
Trembling before a sorrow past relief.

Mother, you understand no politics,—
Monsieur Napoleon, that's his true name, sticks
To his rights. Look, he is poor, and a prince,
He loves palaces he enjoyed long since,
It suits him to have horses, servants, gold
For his table, his hunt, his play high and bold,
His alcove rich-decked, his furniture brave,
And by the same occasion he may save
The Family, Society, and the Church;
Should not the eagle on the high rock perch?
Should he not take advantage of the time
When all ends can be served? 'Twould be a crime.
He must have Saint-Cloud bedecked with the rose
Where Prefects and Mayors may kiss his toes.
And so it is,— that old grandmothers must
Trail their grey hair in the mire and the dust,
While they sew with fingers trembling and cold,
The shroud of poor children, seven years old.

APOSTROPHE TO NATURE

O soleil, ô face divine

O Sun! bright face aye undefiled;
O flowers i' the valley blooming wild;
Caverns, dim haunt of Solitude;
Perfume whereby one's step's beguiled
Deep, deep into the sombre wood; —

O sacred hills that heavenward climb,
White as a temple-front, sublime;
Old oaks, that centuries might inherit,—
Somewhat whereof I feel (what time
'Neath you I stand) endues *my* spirit; —

O virgin forest, crystal spring,
Lake where no storm for long can fling
Darkness, clear heaven-reflecting face; —
Pure soul of Nature unslumbering,
What think you of this bandit base?

THE EXILE'S CHOICE

Puisque le juste est dans l'abime

Since Justice slumbers in the abysm,
Since the Crime's crowned with despotism,
Since all most upright souls are smitten,
Since proudest souls are bowed for shame,
Since on the wall in lines of flame
My country's dark dishonour's written;

O grand Republic of our sires,
Pantheon filled with sacred fires,
In the free azure golden dome,

Temple with Shades immortal thronged,
Since thus thy glory they have wronged,
With "Empire" staining Freedom's home;

Since in my country each soul born
Is base; since there are laughed to scorn
The true, the pure, the great, the brave,
The indignant eyes of history,
Honour, law, right, and liberty,
And those,— alas! — within the grave;

Solitude, exile! I love them!
Sorrow, be thou my diadem!
Poverty love I,— for 'tis pride!
My rugged home winds beat upon;
And even that awful Statue wan
Aye seated silent by my side.

I love the woe that proves me strong;
That shadow of fate which all ye throng;
O ye to whom high hearts aye bow,—
Faith, Virtue veiled, stern Dignity,
And thou, proud Exile, Liberty,
And, nobler yet, Devotion thou!

I love this islet lonely, bold,
Jersey, whereover England's old
Free banner doth the storm-blast brave;
Yon darkling ocean's ebb and flow,
Its vessels, each a wandering plough,
Whose mystic furrow is the wave.

I love thy gull, with snowy wing
In pearls to the wind blithe scattering,
O ocean vast, thy sunny spray;

Who darts beneath huge billows gaping,
Soon from those monstrous throats escaping
As a soul from sorrow flits away!

I love the rock — how solemn, stern!
Thence harkening aye the plaint eterne
On the wild air around me shed,
Ever the sullen night outpours,—
Of waves that sob on sombre shores,
Of mothers mourning children dead!

THE SOLDIERS OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

O soldats de l'an deux! ô guerres! épopées!

Soldiers of the Year Two! Warriors, who drew your swords
Against the kings, against Austrian, Prussian hordes
Swarming to the attack,
And against all the Tyres and Sodoms where you came —
Against the Czar of the North, hunter of human game,
Followed by all his pack;

Against all Europe with her captains armed for war,
With all her foot-soldiers blackening her plains afar,
With all her squadrons fleet
Rolling forward, erect, as a live hydra rolls,
You chanted as you marched, with no fear in your souls,
With no shoes on your feet!

Everywhere, east and west, to the south, to the north,
With their old muskets rattling on their shoulders, forth,
Over the hills, the streams,

Sleepless, reposeless, out at elbows, they would pass,
Foodless and proud and glad, blowing on their horns of brass
Like the bad spirits in dreams.

With the high thought of liberty their souls waxed great.
Ships are taken by storm, frontiers obliterate
Before them as they go.
O France, every day some miracle was there,
Shocks and encounters, fights! On the Adige Joubert,
And on the Rhine Marceau!

The vanguard they o'ercame, the centre they o'erthrew;
In the snow, in the rain, water their middles to,
On they went, ever on;
And one flung wide his gates, and one was brought to his knees;
And as dead leaves go flying before the flying breeze
Throne after throne was gone.—

The Revolution shouted to them "Volunteers,
Die for the liberties of all mankind — your peers!"
"We are content" they said;
"Forward, my grey recruits, my beardless generals!"
And proudly they marched forth, to the sound of bare foot-falls,
Over the world dismayed.

Nothing they knew of terror, nothing of despair.
They would have scaled, doubtless, the ramparts of the air
If, turning back their eyes

In their Olympian course, they had but seemed to see
The finger of the great Republic silently
Pointing them to the skies!

NAPOLEON THE LITTLE

Ah! tu finiras bien par hurler, misérable!

How well I knew this stealthy wolf would howl,
When in the eagle talons ta'en in air!
Aglow, I snatched thee from thy prey — thou fowl —
I held thee, abject conqueror, just where
All see the stigma of a fitting name
As deeply red as deeply black thy shame!
And though thy matchless impudence may frame
Some mask of seeming courage — spite thy sneer,
And thou assurest sloth and skunk: "It does not smart!"
Thou feel'st it burning, in and in,— and fear
None will forget it till shall fall the deadly dart!

FABLE OR HISTORY

(Bismarck and Napoleon III.)

Un jour, maigre et sentant un royal appétit

One fasting day, itched by his appetite,
A monkey took a fallen tiger's hide
And, where the wearer had been savage, tried
To overpass his model. Scratch and bite
Gave place, however, to mere gnash of teeth and screams,
But, as he prowled, he made his hearers fly

With crying often: "See the Terror of your dreams!"
Till, far too long, none ventured thither nigh.
Left undisturbed to snatch, and clog his brambled den
With sleepers' bones and plumes of daunted doves,
And other spoil of beasts as timid as the men,
Who shrank when he mock-roared, from glens and groves —
He begged his fellows view the crannies crammed with pelf
Sordid and tawdry, stained and tinselled things,
As ample proof he was the Royal Tiger's self!
Year in, year out, this still he purrs and sings
Till tramps a butcher by — he risks his head —
In darts the hand and crushes out the yell,
And plucks the hide — as from a nut the shell —
He holds him nude, and sneers: "An ape you dread!"

THE CITY MAN AT HOME

Il est certains bourgeois, prêtres du dieu Boutique

There is a sort of townsfolk, priests of the God of gains,
Men who have more of Chremes than Cato in their veins,
Who walk about with bill-clips when the Exchange is full,
Who for the golden calf's sake accept the brazen bull
Who can put up with Phalaris for love of their strong box,
And above all set store on their dividends and stocks.

In other things good fellows, but of the coarser grain;
They voted Aye; to-morrow they mean to vote again.
If they turn over a pamphlet, while smoking their cigars,
Expressed with any freedom — their feet upon the bars,
Thus to themselves such voters take count of what is what:
"This book is very shocking; what right has this man got
To be upright and lofty, when I am cowardly?
In blaming Bonaparte, the fellow censures me.
I hold the man a scoundrel, as much as he can do;
But wherefore must he say so? This Bonaparte,— true,
Is faithless, is disloyal — a perjurer, a thief,
A forger, that is certain; his policy, in brief,
Is pillage; he has outlawed even judges of assize;
Of the Orleans princes' purses he has made private prize;
He is the greatest blackguard that ever went unhung;
But, since I voted for him, this scribe should hold his tongue.
To write against him is to be hard on me, in fact;
It is to come and tell me —"This is how brave men act!"
And 'tis a way of saying, or getting it implied,
That we are good for nothing, who do not take a side.

"Oh yes, I must admit it, we have the handcuffs on.
What then? The funds were falling, and something must be done.
'Twas of the Red Republic that people were afraid;
Or even of the Republic of a much paler shade.

To save us from the spectre that Monsieur Romieu drew,
We prudently take shelter behind this knavish crew:
To escape a reign of terror, avoid a peasants' war,
We find this varlet handy — we make him emperor.
The thing is very simple. Now, when the press speaks ill
Of this administration, I feel a painful thrill.
For him to get a whipping may possibly be right;
But this is to insinuate that I, a peaceful wight,
Who made the scamp a consul — an emperor — appear
To have cheered him from self-interest, and voted Aye through fear.
I think it most uncivil that such things should be said,
Because I pull discretion, like bedclothes, round my head.
I can see nothing tempting, just now, in bravery,
And courage, in another, puts an affront on me."

Thinkers, when you are branding this caitiff as is meet,
Who has stripped Justice naked and scourged her in the street,
When you avenge a people, thus taken by the throat,
You take up your position between Gérontes, who vote,
And a Sbogár, who governs; and your too burning pen —
Anarchic — irreligious — attaints your countrymen,
Both governor and governed, either of crime or vice,
Him, for his felon treason; them, for cowardice.

A LAMENT

Sentiers où l'herbe se balance

O PATHS whereon wild grasses wave!
O valleys! hillsides! forests hoar!
Why are ye silent as the grave?
For One, who came, and comes no more!

Why is thy window closed of late?
And why thy garden in its sere?
O house! where doth thy master wait?
I only know he is not here.

Good dog! thou watchest; yet no hand
Will feed thee. In the house is none.
Whom weepest thou? child! My father. And
O wife! whom weepest thou? The Gone.

Where is he gone? Into the dark.—
O sad, and ever-plaining surge!
Whence art thou? From the convict-bark.
And why thy mournful voice? A dirge.

NO

Laissons le glaive à Rome et le stylet à Sparte

LET Sparta daggers use, and Rome the sword,
But let not us in haste revenge to fetch,
A Brutus to knave Bonaparte afford,
But for a bitterer future keep the wretch.

I warrant you, you shall be satisfied —
You, by whom exile's grievous weight is borne;
Captives and martyrs, now by him defied —
You shall be sated, you who grieve and mourn.

Still in the scabbard leave the impatient blade;
The guilty ne'er is pardoned by his crime.
Trust the commands of God, though long delayed
(The patient judge), to his Avenger — Time.

Let him then live in depths of infamy;
His blood would e'en disgrace the headsman's stroke.
Let Time, the terrible unknown, draw nigh,
Who chastisement holds hidden 'neath his cloak.

Let him be crowned as deepest in disgrace,
The master of low brows and hearts defiled;
Let senators vote empires to his race,
If he can find a mate and have a child.

By means of mass and murder let him reign;
Of this Arch-Rogue an Emperor let them make;
And let the grovelling Church, his courtesan,
Glide to his den, and there his bed partake.

Let Sibour honour, Troplong hold him dear;
Let them his foot, deep-dipt in blood, embrace;
Let Cæsar live — Louvel and Lacenaire
Would count the killing such a knave disgrace.

Kill not this man, ye who on vengeance think —
Mysterious dreamers, solitary, strong —
Who, while his minions feast, and with him drink,
Walks with clenched fist the murdered dead among.

Our triumph is secure, with help from high;
Than fury's bolt, example reckons more.
No! — kill him not; the scathing pillory
Graced sometimes should be by an Emperor.

SACER ESTO

Non, Liberté! non, Peuple

No, Freedom! People, no! He must not die —
'Twould be too simple, too unscorned an end,
After all law destroyed.— The hour brought nigh,
When holy shame must back to heaven ascend.

After his bloody wager, foully won,
Conqueror by ambush laid, by fire and sword;
After his perjury, plots, murders done,
His false oath taken — crime by God abhorred.

After he has dragged France, stabbed to the heart,
To his polluted car tied by the feet,
Should the vile wretch by a sword-stroke depart,
And death like Pompey or like Cæsar meet?

No! He th' Assassin is, who basely killed,
Who sabred, and shot down without remorse;
Who has made houses empty, graves has filled,
And walks 'neath the fixed gaze of many a corpse!

By this Man's deed — Ephemeral Emperor —
Daughters and sons are fatherless and sad;
The widow weeps, kneels, sobs, her anguish o'er;
The Mother seems a ghost in mourning clad.

The reels which weave his robes of royalty,
Deep dyed, are wound about with blood-stained thread;
Montmartre's Boulevard doth the vat supply,
And steeps his mantle in imperial red!

He exiles you to Afric, to Cayenne —
Heroes and Martyrs! whom he convicts calls.
His dripping Guillotine its knife doth stain,
And drop by drop the blood upon him falls.

When livid treason, of his crimes the guide,
Raps at his door, he welcomes his ally.—
He is the Fratricide, the Parricide:
People, on this account he must not die.

Keep the man living.— Noble punishment!
Would that some day, him we may wandering find,
Naked, crouched, shivering, like reed tempest bent
Beneath the execration of mankind.

Clasped by the past — crammed with those crimes of his,
As with a crown all bristling o'er with nails,
Seeking dark spots — the forest, the abyss;
Pale, scared, and whom the wolf as kindred hails.

In some vile hulks, fetters his only sound,
Telling to the deaf rocks his vain despair;
Alone, alone, Silence and Hate around —
Men nowhere near, and Spectres everywhere!

Aged, rejected by Death's scornful hand,
Doomed, abject, trembling, through long years to plod —
People, avoid that man, marked by a brand:
Let Cain pass by, for he belongs to God.

APATHY

Ceux qui vivent, ce sont ceux qui luttent

They who never cease to strive
Can alone be called alive.
If a purpose fixed we trace
In their soul and on their face,
If the steep ascent they climb
Of a destiny sublime,
Marching forward day and night,
Ever keeping well in sight
Something worthy of their love,
Or some mission from above,
If their hearts are good and true,
If they know what they would do —
Priest who bows before the ark,
Worker, pastor, patriarch —
These alone, O God, are living!
Others fill me with misgiving;
Dizzy with the random stress
Of their being's emptiness,
Theirs is that most heavy fate,
Without life to vegetate.
Useless, isolated, slow,
They go trailing here below
Weight enough their souls to sink,
Doomed to be, but not to think.
They are called the mob — the herd,
That which buzzes and is stirred,
Gapes and hisses, laughs and cries,
Now assents and straight denies;
Nameless, headless, featureless,
In unmeaning restlessness
Ready to applaud or hoot,

Clap or trample under foot.
These are they who perch and flit,
First condemn, and then acquit,
Doubt, destroy, are gay or serious,
Swear by Marat — or Tiberius.
Names unnumbered and untold,
With bare arms, or laced with gold,
Chill and youthless, they pass by
Without aim, without a tie;
Fragments of the human race
Crumbling into dust at base;
Men forlorn of word and will,
Shadows round them deepening still;
Nothing but a twilight ray
Left them of their noon of day;
Utterers of cries of fright;
Wanderers on the verge of night.

Life without love — O dreary round of blank inanity,
Without regret for what has been, or thought of what may be!
To walk forthright, not knowing in what ways their steps have trod;
To join the laugh at Jupiter, and have no faith in God;
To view without emotion stars, flowers, and womankind;
Always to clasp the outward form, not seek the inward mind;
Always in quest of vain results as vain a path to tread,
Looking for nothing from on high, forgetting even the dead;

Oh no! I am not one of these high-placed or happy men,
Powerful and proud — or sneaking safe, hid in some unclean den;
I loathe them, and avoid and fly the print-marks of their feet;
And I would rather choose to be — O pismires of the street!
Mob! multitude! O you dead hearts! sham men! degenerate crew!
A wilding in the woodland, than a living man like you.

THE DAWN

Un immense frisson émeut la plaine obscure

A SUDDEN shudder sweeps across the plain
Still dark. It is the morning hour again,
The hour when loved Pythagoras to muse,
And Hesiod thoughtful walked on glittering dews,
The hour when, tired of watching through the night
The sombre heavens and each mysterious light,
The herdsmen of Chaldea felt a chill,
That horror of deep darkness, and that thrill,
That comes o'er watchers when their forces fail.
Down there, the fall of water in the vale
Seems wrinkled in a thousand folds, and shines
Like a rich satin garment. O'er the pines
Upon the sad horizon gleams the Morn,
Whose teeth the pearls, whose lips the roses scorn.
The oxen dream and bellow; bullfinch, thrush,
And whistling jay awake in every bush;
And from the wood in wild confusion blent
Resound the chirp and hum from throats long pent;
The sheep display their fleece across the fence,

Not white as snow, but of a gold intense;
And the young girl upon her bed of down,
Fresh as a rose, black-eyed, in shadow brown,
With shoulders white emerging from her gown,
But half awake — thrusts out a foot that tries
To find the Chinese slipper ere she rise.

Praise be to God! After the sullen night
Always arrives the day, the welcome light
Eternal. On the mount wave heath and broom,
Nature superb and tranquil dons her bloom,
The light awakes the brood, the young ones cry,
The cottage lifts its smoke-wreath to the sky,
Arrows of gold their way through forests force;
Sooner than stop the sun upon its course,
One might reform the mean ignoble ways
Of those that rule us in these evil days,
To honour turn, to public good incline,
The soul of minister and base divine.

A NIGHT'S LODGING

Aventurier conduit par le louche destin

Adventurer by squint-eyed fortune led
As to an inn for one night's board and bed,
Enter the Louvre and put up the hired hack —
Thy Empire. Molière behind thy back
Beckons to Shakespeare, asking "Can it be
My Scapin?" "Or my Richard?" answers he.
Swear, enter, cross thy forehead. The old Inn
Is lighted up in every nook within.
Over the ancient Seine, nearly in line
With the Pont Neuf, grimy with age, the sign
Creeks from the rusty balcony, where shot

King Charles the Ninth, once, at a Huguenot;
Of its inscription only half a word —
"Sacred" remains; the end of "massacred."
The dingy haunt swarms with ill-favoured throngs.
Mid bellowed choruses of tipsy songs
They laugh, eat, drink, and the wine flows in streams.
Pole-axe and cleaver dangle from the beams.
These roaring boys have somehow drawn a prize;
One brandishes a torch that blinds the eyes;
"Smash all!" cries one; another "Bag it all!"
The marks of bloody hands are on the wall.
The dishes fume; the red-hot cinders glow
Within the grate; you see them come and go,
With blood-stained hands, in blood-stained cut-aways,
Lick-finger Nisards, scullion Rianceys.
Behind the kitchen-table sit and booze
Fortoul, Chapuys the Bailiff of Toulouse,
Persil, Piétri, Carlier, Ducos,
Magne — signing their cognomens in a row
To a death-warrant — Forey qualified
De Bondy, Rouher by Radetzky's side,
Drouyn by Haynau's — porkers, fain to rout
In dung-heaps, with a senatorial snout!
These knaves have perpetrated wickedness
More than a bishop undertakes to bless.
Rummage and analyze — explore, dissect —
In souls like theirs, whose growth in grace is checked,
You will find — nothing. Up and enter! Wear
Napoleon's hat, the buskins of Macaire!
General Bertrand walks before thee; thunder
Of bravos! shouts of joy, with shrieking under.
Huddled behind, a spectral phalanx lies,
Watching thy entrance with dim staring eyes;
Bevies of sluts about thee reel and rant,

Mixing their dash of slang with floods of cant;
Her ladyship Doll Tearsheet, her grace Mag,
Houris with eyes of jacynth, hearts of slag;
"What are your worship's fashions? Regency?
(Quick, the hair-powder!) or — Directory?
(Madras silk turbans!) Do sir, what you please;
Your name is Plum! Walk in, and take your ease."
Toward these beauties — revelry's soiled doves
Light on the wing — toward these light o' loves
Suin, Mongis (Turgot and D'Aguesseau) steal;
Saint Arnaud, he *steals,* too! Before his meal
Half drunk already, Reybell the bandit
Takes Fould, the Jew, for Sibour's acolyte.
Look, brigand, all is ready; come and sup.
On the mid hearth the huge fire blazes up;
Thy eagle-owl is blazoned on the wall;
The Commons, one whole ox, are roasting all
Before the range; the dripping-pan is full
Of blood that frizzles; at the side-table,
Smiling and chattering, they take their seat,
Magnan that killed — Troplong that cooks the meat.
The grease is sputtering! with an air of glee
Upon his leathern apron leisurely
The carver, Carrelet, sharpens his snicker-snee.
High from the pot-hook swings the budget stew.
Come, favourite alike of priest and Jew,
Hope of the Jesuit and of Israel,
Bound for the galleys from thy Picard cell,
To supper; thou hast earned a full day's hire;
Take the arm-chair before the cheerful fire;
All here uphold thee and acclaim thee chief;
So come, sit down; play the good prince, good thief;
Melt into smiles; warm thyself, dry thyself;
Be private, lay thy glories on the shelf;
— What they call glorious in this rogue's retreat

Is but the mud and blood upon thy feet,
Is but the mire that rusts thy dirty spurs;
Illustrious captains, great philosophers,
On their bright brows may wear a deathless crown;
Thou at thy boot-heels trailest thy renown;
Take off thy glory — with a boot-jack. See,
Dwarf magnates, pygmy heroes, compass thee
Singing thy praise, thou Tom Thumb Attila;
For thee they serve the roast; on thee Maupas,
Thy nigger, waits, and from the ingle-seat
Baroche thy turnspit snarls, and crawls to lick thy feet.

Whilst in their inn these brawl and drink about,
Along a causeway lost in night, without,
His warrant in his wallet, mute, austere,
Spurring his tardy horse to speed, I hear —
As the dark rain-clouds change to azure sky —
The Justicer of God — the destined Hour — draw nigh.

THE IMPERIAL MANTLE[1]

Oh! vous dont le travail est joie

O YE whose labour is bliss alway,
Blithe-wingèd ones who have for prey
But odorous breaths of azure skies,
Who, ere December come, far flee,
Sweet thieves of sweetest blooms, O ye
Who bear to men the honey prize;

Chaste sippers of the morning dew,
Who visit 'neath noon's amorous blue
The lily glowing like a star,—

[1] Referring to Napoleon III.'s taking the bee as a badge.

Fond sisters of May's flowerets bright,
Bees, blithesome daughters of the light,
From that foul mantle flit afar!

Winged warriors, rush upon that man!
O busy toilers, noble clan,
For duty and virtue arduous,
With golden wings, keen darts of flame,
Swarm round that dull foul thing of shame,
And hiss:— "For what hast taken us?

"Accurst! We are the honey-bees!
Our hives the pride of cottages,
From homeliest flowers our sweetest sips!
Though oft, what time warm June discloses
For love of us his loveliest roses,
We're fain to alight on Plato's lips!

"What's born of mire to mire's inclined.
Go, in his lair Tiberius find,
Charles Ninth his balcony upon.
Go, go, Hymettus' bees scarce grace
Your purple, there behoves you place
The black foul swarm of Montfaucon!"

And all together sting him there,—
O tiny warriors of the air,
Sting blind this traitor soulless, base;
Upon him swarm from far and near,
And, since the men of France have fear,
Let bees of France the monster chase!

SEA SONG OF THE EXILES

Adieu, patrie!

Dear land, farewell!
Waves surge and swell.
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Farewell, white Cot, whence the ripe grapes fall,
Gold blooms that bask on the mossy wall!

Dear land, farewell!
Plain, valley, and hill!
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Dear land, farewell!
Waves surge and swell.
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Farewell, Betrothed with the pure pale brow;
'Neath sombre heaven dark billows we plough.

Dear land, farewell!
In thee our loves dwell;
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Dear land, farewell!
Waves surge and swell.
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Our eyes, whose tears all brightness blot,
Leave the dark wave for a darker lot!

Dear land, farewell!
In our heart's a knell.
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

THE WORST TREASON

Le plus haut attentat

THE deepest infamy man can attain,
Is or to strangle Rome, or France enchain;
Whate'er the place, the land, the city be,
'Tis to rob man of soul and liberty —
'Tis with drawn sword the senate to invade,
And murder law, in its own court betrayed.
To enslave the land is guilt of such black dye,
It is ne'er quitted by God's vengeful eye;
The crime once done, the day of grace expires,
Heaven's punishment, which, howe'er slow, ne'er tires,
Begins to march, and comes serene and calm,
With her steel knotted whip beneath her arm.

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Il neigeait

IT snowed. A defeat was our conquest red:
For the first time the eagle hung down its head.
Sombre days! The Emperor slowly came back,
Leaving behind him Moscow smoking and black.
Like an avalanche winter burst amain,

One white plain past, spread another white plain.
Nor banner nor chief any order could keep,
Late the grand army, now bewildered sheep.
The wings from the centre could hardly be known.
It snowed. Dead horses and carts overthrown
Sheltered the wounded. Bivouacs forlorn
Displayed strange sights, sometimes, as broke the morn
Trumpeters were seen, upright at their post,
Mute, on the saddle, and covered with frost;
Trumpets of copper that gave out no tone,
Fixed, as for ever, unto lips of stone.
Bullets, grape-shot and shells, mixed with the snow,
Rained as from heaven upon the troops below.
Surprised to find themselves trembling with cold,
Who ne'er trembled from fear, these veterans bold
Marched pensive; on their grey moustaches clung
The hoar-frost; torn above the banners hung.
It snowed,— it snowed continuous. The chill breeze
Whistled upon the glazed frost's endless seas;
With naked feet, on, on they ever went,
No bread to eat, and not a sheltering tent.
They were no more hearts living, troops of war,
They were mere phantoms of a dream, afar
In darkness wandering, amid vapours dim;
A mystery; of shadows a procession grim
Upon a black sky, to its very rim.
Solitude, vast and frightful to behold,
Was everywhere,— Nemesis mute and cold.
The snow silently as it fell dense,
A shroud immense for this army immense;
And every soul felt as if left alone
In a wide wilderness, where no light shone,
To die, with none to pity or to see.
From this sad empire shall we e'er get free?

Two foes — the Czar, the North. The North is worst.
Cannon were thrown away in haste accurst
To burn the frames and make the scant fire high;
Those who lay down woke not, or woke to die.
Sad and confused, the groups that wildly fled,
Devoured them all, the desert still and dread.
'Neath the white folds the blinding snow had raised
Whole regiments slept. History amazed
Beheld the ruin. What to this retreat,
Was any former downfall or defeat;
What Hannibal's reverses wrapped in gloom!
What Attila's, when whole hordes received their doom!
Fugitives, men wounded, guns, horses, carts,
Tumbrils, and wagons, hurried from all parts
In wild confusion; at the bridges oft
The crush was frightful. Vultures wheeled aloft!
Ten thousand men lay down fatigued to sleep,
And then perhaps a hundred woke; a heap
Of corpses had the rest become. One night,
Ney, whom an army followed late, in flight,
His watch disputed with three Cossacks wild.
"Who goes! Alert! To arms!" And then defiled
These phantoms with their guns, and o'er and o'er,
Came the same scenes of tumult and of gore.
Our troops beheld upon them headlong fall
Time after time, at some strange trumpet-call,
Frightful, enrapt with gloom, with cries like those
Of the bald vultures 'mid the boundless snows,
Horrible squadrons, whirlwinds of wild men.
Perished our army, fled our glory then.
The Emperor was there. He stood and gazed
At the wild havoc all around, amazed.
As on a giant tree for ages spared

Falls the rude axe, misfortune now first dared
To strike upon him, and he trembling saw,
He, living oak, his branches fall, with awe.
Chiefs, soldiers, followers died. But with love,
Those that remained, all dastard fear above,
Still watched his tent to see his shadow pass
Backwards and forwards. They believed, alas!
Yet in his star; it could not, could not be;
He had a work to do, a destiny!
To hurl him headlong from his high estate,
Would be high treason in his bondsman Fate.
And all the while he felt himself alone,
Stunned with disasters few have ever known.
Sudden, a fear came o'er his troubled soul,
What more was written in the Future's scroll?
Was this an expiation? It must be so.
For what? From whom could he the meaning know?
The man of glory trembled, weak and pale,
Like some frail reed beneath an autumn gale.
Where were his legions? Scattered on the plains,
Or buried in the snow. What now remains?
What hides the future still? Ah, who can say?
He turned to God, for one enlightening ray.
"Is this the vengeance, God of Hosts?" he cried,
And his faint murmur on his pale lips died.
"Is this the vengeance? Must my glory set?"
A pause; his name was called; of flame a jet
Sprang in the darkness; a voice answered, "No,
Not yet." Outside still lay the dazzling snow.

HYMN OF THE TRANSPORTED

Prions! voici l'ombre sereine

Let us pray! Lo, the shadow serene!
God, toward Thee our arms are upraised and our eyes.
They who proffer Thee here their tears and their chain
Are the most sorrowful Thy sorrow tries.
Most honour have they being possessed of most pain.

Let us suffer! The crime will take flight.
Birds passing,— our cottages!
Winds passing,— on weary knees
Mothers, sisters, weep there day and night!
Winds, tell them our miseries!
Birds, bear our heart's love to their sight!

Our thought is uplifted to Thee,
God! The proscribed we beseech Thee forget,
But give back her glory to France whom we see
Shame-smitten; ay! slay us, us sorrow-beset,
Whom hot day but consigns to chill night's agony!

Let us suffer! The crime —

As a bowman striketh a mark,
The fierce sun smites us with shafts of fire;
After dire day-labour, no sleep in night dark;
The bat that takes wing from the marish-mire,—
Fever,— flaps noiseless our brows — and leaves stark.

Let us suffer! The crime —

Athirst! The scant water-drop burns!
An-hungered! — black bread! work, work, ye accurst!
At each stroke of the pick wild laughter returns
Loud-echoèd; lo, from the soil Death hath burst,
Round a man folds arms, and to sleep anew turns.

Let us suffer! The crime —

What matters it! Nothing can tame
Us; we are tortured and we are content.
And we thank high God toward Whom like flame
Our hymn burneth, that unto us suffering is sent,
When all they that endure not suffering bear shame.

Let us suffer! The crime —

Live the Republic world-great!
Peace to the vast mysterious even!
Peace to the dead sweet slumber doth sate!
To wan ocean peace, that blends beneath heaven
Africa's sob with Cayenne's wail of hate!

Let us suffer! The crime will take flight.
Birds passing,— our cottages!
Winds passing,— on weary knees
Mothers, sisters, weep there day and night!
Winds, tell them our miseries!
Birds, bear our heart's love to their sight!

THE OCEAN'S SONG

Nous nous promenions

We walked amongst the ruins famed in story
Of Rozel-Tower,
And saw the boundless waters stretch in glory
And heave in power.

O ocean vast! We heard thy song with wonder,
The waves kept time.
"Appear, O Truth!" thou sang'st with voice of thunder,
"And shine sublime!

"The world's enslaved and hunted down by beagles,—
To despots sold;
Souls of deep thinkers, soar like mighty eagles,
The Right uphold.

"Be born; arise; o'er earth and wild waves bounding
Peoples and suns!
Let darkness vanish; tocsins be resounding,
And flashing, guns!

"And you, who love no pomps of fogs, nor glamour,
Who fear no shocks,
Brave foam and lightning, hurricane and clamour,
Exiles and the rocks!"

TO THOSE WHO SLEEP

Réveillez-vous, assez de honte!

Enough of shame — awake, Time cries,
To brave the bullets and the guns,
Still at its hour the tide must rise,
And France relies upon her sons.
Now tuck up sleeves of blouses blue,
Remember, the men of Ninety-two
Dared twenty kings on battle plains —
Bastilles again and vilest chains!

What, when the sires could Titans brave,
Shall dwarfs like these the sons enslave?

Sweep away the tryrant, and his bandits accurst!
God, God is with you, let Baal's priests do their worst!
God is king over all.
Before Him who is strong? Lo! He lifts up His hand,
And the tigers fly howling through deserts of sand,
And the sea-serpents crawl,
Obedient and meek! He breathes on idols of gold
In their temples of marble, gigantic and old,
And like Dagon they fall!

You are not armed? It matters not,
Tear out the hinges of the door!
A hammer has deliverance wrought;
David had pebbles from the shore.
Shout for the Cause — the flag advance!
Become once more the mighty France!
Paw as of old — with lowering horn!
Deliver, amid blood and smoke,
Your country from the despot's yoke,
Your memory from contempt and scorn.

What, know ye not, the Royalists themselves were great
In the fierce days of struggle past away? Men relate
What courage urged them on.
Valour in those times added a foot to men's height,
Witness, O Vendée, If I speak not aright!
Witness, thou land Breton!
To conquer a bastion, or to break through a wall,

Or spike a whole battery 'mid rain-showers of ball,
Often one man has gone!

If in this sink still, still men live,
If Frenchmen still, still act as slaves,
Trumpets and drums be broken,— give
Their fragments to the breezes. Graves
Of our sires where slumber deep
The old race, stir no more, but keep
Their shades in closest prison bound:
For never could they — would they own
Such dastard sons; nor hare nor hound
The lion breeds, but whelps alone.

TO THE PEOPLE

Il te ressemble; il est terrible et pacifique

It resembles thee; pacific yet dread,
A level under the Infinite spread;
It moves, 'tis immense, 'tis soothed by a ray,
And kindled to wrath by Zephyr at play;
'Tis music or discord: sweet is its song,
Or hoarse its shriek as complaining of wrong;
Monsters at ease sleep in its depths dark-green;
The water-spout germinates there unseen;
It has gulfs unknown, 'neath its surface plain,
And those who visit them come not again;
It lifts ships colossal and hurls them down
As thou hurlest despots. Black is its frown;
The beacon above it shines like the light
Thou hast from heaven, thy steps to guide right;
It caresses and chides if soft its mood
Or angry, but by no man understood
Is its humour. Like the terrible shock

Of armour clangs its wave on the rock;
Night listens with awe to the portentous sound
As it feels that, like thee, the depth profound
Having roared at eve, shall destroy at morn,
For the wave is a sword. Venus when born
It hails with a hymn, immense and sublime,
Which has resounded through æons of time:
Its universal blue, its wide, wide expanse
Shelters the stars that there tremble and dance;
It has a rude force, a mercy superb,
For it roots up a rock, and spares an herb;
It throws like thee on proud summits its foam;
Inconstant, it loves round the world to roam;
Only — it never deceives when, with eye
Fixed on its surface, one watches it nigh
From some rock or the sands, pensive, alone,
Spell-bound by its murmur, grand monotone.

THE PARTY OF CRIME

Ainsi ce gouvernant dont l'ongle est une griffe

This Government with Tiger claws and heart!
Imperial Mask — Fictitious Bonaparte!
Doubtless Beauharnais — Verhuell possibly —
Who, that Rome catholic might crucify
Rome's free Republic, gave it bound by stealth;
That man, th' Assassin of the commonwealth;
That upstart, whom to push blind Fortune chose;
That glutton, who ne'er to ambition rose;
That "Highness," base, skilled to seize lucky times;
That wolf, on whom I loose a pack of rhymes.
What then? This Buccaneer, this reprobate,
Has changed a day of pride to shame and hate,
On glory loaded crime, soiled victory,

And, wretch! robbed Austerlitz from history!
A dagger from that trophy proud has ta'en,
And townsmen, workmen, countrymen has slain;
Has of the dead piled up a dreadful heap,
While his arm-chair did safe the coward keep.
Sabre in hand, upon his oath he rushed,
And justice, right, and government he crushed:
Law, honour — all, yes even Hope he killed,
And with pure blood (your blood, O France!) has filled
All of our rivers, from the Seine to Var —
Thus won the Louvre, while he deserved Clamàr.

And now he reigns, leaning his heel, that drips
With blood, my country! on thy wounded lips.
This has he done — I nought exaggerate —
And when this Gallows-bird we reprobate,
And all the frauds which in his treason teem
(So monstrous one might think the whole a dream),
And cry, by horror roused, with scorn replete,
March, people! fly to arms! invade the street,
Down with that sword, unworthy of the name,
Let day re-shine, and right her reign reclaim,
'Tis we, forsooth, proscribed by these vile curs,
Who are assassins, bandits, murderers; —
'Tis we who blood and civil war desire —
'Tis we who set the town, the land on fire!

What then? To reign through death, to trample right,
To be a knave, hard, cynical, adroit;
To say, "I'm Cæsar," while you're but a clown,
To stifle thought — life, breath, to trample down;
To force great eighty-nine to retrograde,
The laws, the press, the tribune to invade;
To muzzle the Great Nation as a beast,

To reign by force, yourself from fear released;
For felon's sake, abuses to restore,
And France to hand to greedy Troplongs o'er,
On pretext that she was in times long since
Devoured by King, and Gentleman, and Prince;
To give these dogs what those old lions left,
Millions and palaces, gleesome and deft,
To seize; — plain despotism to profess,
And riot in debauches and excess;
Heroes to torture and the hulks to give,
The great, the good, to exile, and to live
'Mid Greeks, as for Byzantian despot meet;
To be the arms that kill, the hands that cheat.
People! This then is virtue, righteousness!
While justice murder-stricken, to confess
In exile, through the fumes of incense base,
Armies to tell and Tyrants to their face —
Your name is force, injustice, robbery,
Soldiers you have, and vast artillery;
The earth a kingdom 'neath your feet we see —
You the Colossus, and the atom we,
Still we choose war, for liberty to fight,
You for oppression, we for truth and right;
To show the pontons and dark catacombs,
And cry, while standing o'er the late filled tombs:
Frenchmen, beware the day of late remorse,
For children's tears, and many a martyred corse;
Break that sepulchral man, wake France to light,
Tear from your flesh that Nero parasite;
Rise from the blood-stained earth, beauteous and bold,
The sword one hand, and one the law shall hold!

For us such words to speak, perform this task,
This Pirate chase, this Hypocrite unmask

(Since honour, duty, to this strife compel),
Is crime! — Hear this, Thou who on high dost dwell.
O God! this they maintain before Thy face,
Dread witness of all crimes in every place:
'Tis this they spread before th' Eternal eyes!

What fumes of blood from all their hands arise!
What babes, old men, wives, maidens, yet have not
Had time within their dismal graves to rot!
What? Paris still is bleeding, still each eye
Can see in heaven inscribed his perjury!
And these foul wretches dare reproaches heap!
O just eruption of resentment deep!

And many a sot — triumphant, bloated, red —
Answers — "Your noise disturbs me in my bed;
All goes on well, tradesmen get rich a-pace;
Our women are one mass of flowers and lace.
Of what do you complain?"— Another calls
(Some empty dandy who the pavement crawls),
"From 'change each day some twenty pounds I bring:
Money flows free, as water from the spring;
Workmen have now three times their former wage.
Splendid! To make and spend is all the rage.
It seems some demagogues are sent away —
Right, too —
I praise the feast, the ball, the play
Given by the Prince, whom I did erst resist
Wrongly. What matters certain dolts dismissed?
As for the dead — they're dead; let the fools be.
Hail! men of sense — and easy times for me,
Where you may choose a dozen schemes among,
And boldly speculate, and can't go wrong.
The red republic may in caverns bark

Freedom, Right, Progress. Bosh! — they're madness stark.
I pocketed a premium even now,
And I don't care — (I must the charge allow,
Not minding the philippics which you bawl) —
If prices rise, should honour chance to fall."

O hideous speech! —'tis held — you hear the cry!
Learn then the dregs, contented Infamy:
That once for all we to your face declare,
That we, the wanderers, scattered everywhere,
Roaming without or passport, heart, or name —
We, the proscribed, you cannot daunt or shame;
We, to the land's disgrace who ne'er consent
(And though the while on justice sternly bent),
No scaffolds, no reprisals wish to have;
We whom this Mandarin thinks he can enslave,
We to see liberty revive, and shame
Die, and all brows respect and worth reclaim,
To free Rome, Lombards, Germans, Hungary,
To bid shine forth the Sun of Freedom's sky,
The mother Commonwealth, and Europe's guide,
That forge and palace may in peace abide;
To bring that flower, Fraternity, to light,
And to give labour uncontested right;
To rescue martyrs from the galley's oar,
Husbands to wives, and sons to sires restore,—
In short, this mighty nation, and the age,
From Bonaparte and shame to disengage:
To reach this end which soul, which heart enjoins,
In silence and in gloom we gird our loins.

And know we're ready, plans and means bethought —
The sacrifice is all, the danger nought —
Ready, when God gives sign, to yield our breath,

For, seeing what now lives, we covet death;
For 'neath this brass-browed scoundrel, who would be?
We lost to country — you to liberty.
Learn you, who think free air might harm your health,
You, who from out this dunghill dig your wealth
We will not let the land in slumber lie,
But we will summon, till our latest sigh,
To help of France, now fettered, strangled, sold,
Sacred revolt.— Like our great sires of old,
We summon God's own lightning to our aid.

This is our purpose, and we thus are made;
Preferring, if Fate wills, to see our blood
Crushed 'neath His wheels, than wallow in your mud.

ADVICE AND REPLY

On dit: "Soyez prudent"

They say, Oh, be prudent. Then comes this dithyrambe:
Wouldst thou strike down Nero?
Then crawl and be noiseless — a wolf clothed like a lamb!
Success makes the hero.

Think of Ettenheim; wait; wait the day and the hour,
In patience be grounded;
Like Chereas, come alone, silent, sure of thy power,
By darkness surrounded.

Let Prudence conduct thee, thy reward she shall give;
Be masked, false and hollow;
Ah well: let those anxious a long period to live
This sage counsel follow.

THE TRUMPETS OF THE MIND

Sonnez, sonnez toujours, clairons de la pensée

SOUND, sound for ever, clarions of thought!

When Joshua 'gainst the high-walled city fought,
He marched around it with his head raised high,
His troops in serried order following nigh,
But not a sword was drawn, no blood outsprang,
Only the trumpets the shrill onset rang.
At the first blast, smiled scornfully the king,
And at the second said, half wondering:
"Hop'st thou with noise my fortress to break down?"
At the third round, the ark of old renown
Swept forward, then the trumpets sounding loud,
And then the troops with ensigns waving proud.
Stepped out upon the old walls children dark
With horns to mock the notes and hiss the ark.
At the fourth turn, braving the Israelites,
Women appeared on crenellated heights —
Those battlements embrowned with age and rust —
And hurled upon the Hebrews stones and dust,
And spun and sang when weary of the game.
At the fifth time up came the blind and lame,
And with wild uproar clamorous and high
Railed at the clarion ringing in the sky.
At the sixth time, upon a tower's high crest,

So high that there the eagle built his nest,
So hard that on it lightning struck in vain,
Appeared in merriment the king again:
"These Hebrew Jews musicians are, it seems!"
He said, loud laughing, "but they live on dreams."
The princes laughed submissive to the king,
Laughed all the courtiers in a glittering ring,
And thence the laughter spread through all the town.

At the seventh time — the city walls fell down.

THE BLACK HUNTSMAN

Qu'es-tu passant?

"WHAT art thou, wanderer? The wood is eerie,
The far rooks fly, and their flight grows weary,
Near rides the rack!"
"I am he that hunts through darkness dreary,—
The Huntsman Black!"

The faint forest-leaves, by the sharp wind rifted,
Shriek . . . one had said
That a witch's revel, with wild cries drifted,
Through the wood was spread;
In a clear cloud-way, with pale locks uplifted,
The moon smiles dread.

Cleave to the buck, cleave to the hind,
Scour the dark woods, scour wastes yet lined
With eve's wan track.
Cleave to the Czar, cleave to Austria blind,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves . . . .

Girth thy garb, let thy blast ring not least,
Cleave to the deer that wend slowly to feast
On the rich grass track.
Cleave to the king, cleave to the priest,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves . . . .

It thunders, the rain blinds, the river-floods rise!
No rest for the fearful fox under the skies,—
Thou'rt still on his track!
Cleave to the judge, cleave to the spies,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves . . . .

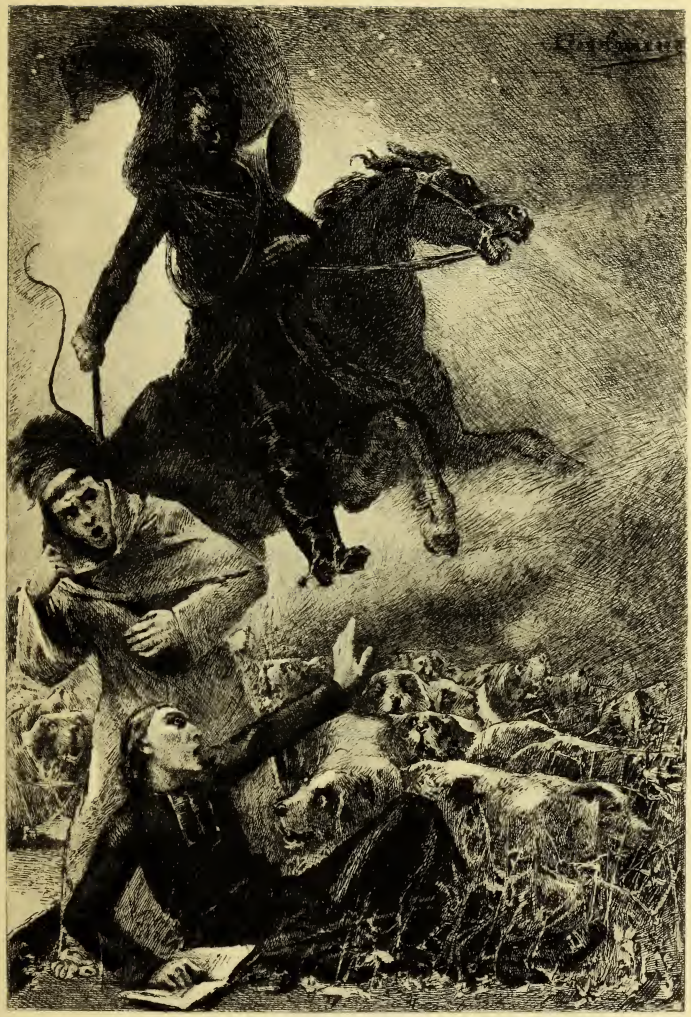
The myriad imps of St. Anthony leap
'Mong oats which wild dance i' the wind aye keep,
But can turn thee not back —
Cleave to the monk, goad him from sleep,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves . . .

Cleave to the bears, thy hounds in full cry!
The wild boar knowing no shelter shall die:
On, on with thy pack!
Cleave to the crowned, to the mitred Lie,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves . . . .

The dastard wolf from thy following has turned;
Round with thy hounds for the death he hath earned,
Quick, follow him back!



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Crush the foul beast that all pity hath spurned,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves, by the sharp wind rifted,
Fall . . . one had said
That the darkling revel with hoarse cries drifted
Through the wood was sped;
The clarion of dawn through the cloud is uplifted,—
Sweet sunlight's spread!

The world reneweth its old-world might;
Our France art thou that of yore brake night
In splendid attack;
Our fair Archangel clothed round with light,
O Huntsman Black!

The faint forest-leaves, by the sharp wind rifted,
Fall . . . one had said
That the darkling revel with hoarse cries drifted
Through the wood was sped;
The clarion of dawn through the cloud is uplifted,—
Sweet sunlight's spread!

SONG

Sa grandeur éblouit l'histoire

He shines through history like a sun.
For thrice five years
He bore bright victory through the dun
King-shadowed spheres;

Proud Europe 'neath his law of might
  Low-bowed the knee —
Thou, poor ape, hobble after aright,
  Petit, petit!

Napoleon in the roar of fight,
  Calm and serene,
Guided athwart the fiery flight
  His eagle keen.
Upon Arcola bridge he trod,
  And came forth free —
Come! here is gold, adore thy god,
  Petit, petit!

Viennas were his lights-o'-love,
  He ravished *them;*
Blithely he seized brave heights above
  By the iron hem;
Castles caught he by the curls,
  His bride to be —
For thee here are the poor pale girls,
  Petit, petit!

He passed o'er mountains, deserts, plains,
  Having in hand
The palm, the lightning, and the reins
  Of every land:
Drunken, he tottered on the brink
  Of deity — . .
Here is sweet blood! quick, run to drink,
  Petit, petit!

Then when he fell, loosening the world,
  The abysmal sea
Made wide her depths for him, down-hurled
  By Liberty:

Th' archangel plunged from where he stood,
And earth breathed free —
Thou! drown thyself in thy own mud,
Petit, petit!

PATRIA [1]

Là-haut, qui sourit?

WHO smiles there? Is it
A stray spirit,
Or woman fair?
Sombre yet soft is the brow!
Bow, nations, bow;
O soul in air,
Speak — what art thou?

In grief the fair face seems —
What mean these sudden gleams?
Our antique pride and dreams
Start up, and beams
The conquering glance,—
To make our sad hearts dance,
And wakes in woods hushed long
The wild bird's song.

Angel of Day!
Our Hope, Love, Stay,
Thy countenance
Lights land and sea
Eternally,
Thy name is France
Or Verity.

[1] Written to music by Beethoven.

Fair angel, in thy glass
When vile things move or pass,
Clouds in the skies amass;
  Terrible, alas!
Thy stern commands are then:
"Form your battalions, men,
The flag display!"
  And men obey.

Angel of might
  Sent kings to smite,
  The words in dark skies glance,
"Mené, Mené;" hiss
  Bolts that never miss!
  Thy name is France,
  Or, Nemesis.

As halcyons in May,
O nations, in his ray
Float and bask for aye,
  Nor know decay!
One arm upraised to heaven
Shuts the past forgiven;
One holds a sword
  To quell hell's horde,

Angel of God!
  Thy wings stretch broad
  As heaven's expanse!
To shield and free
  Humanity!
  Thy name is France,
  Or, Liberty!

THE WRECK

Cette nuit, il pleuvait, la marée était haute

Last night it poured; there was a high spring-tide;
A thick grey mist covered the whole sea-side;
The breakers bayed like hounds; the heaving main
Joined its dark sobbing to the tears of rain;
The unknown shook and mingled in its urn
Those rolling lots that whelm us all in turn;
The gulfs of night seemed through the air to roar;
I heard the alarm-bell sound along the shore;
Out of the gloom, as squall succeeded squall,
For help — for help I heard a seaman's call;
The death-cry of a vessel in distress,
Anchorless, mastless, helmless, shelterless.
I sallied forth. A scared crone crossed my track,
Muttering, "She's gone; it was a fishing-smack."
I ran to the beach, and found one winding-sheet
Of mist and midnight wrapped about my feet;
I stood alone with an o'ershadowing dread;
The while the billows, rearing up their head,
Wroth to be spied, came bellowing after me,
Chasing the witness of their cruelty.

O Thou who triest the very heart and reins,
Author of earthquakes, Lord of hurricanes!
After the shipwreck of so many great,
Wert thou of ruin so insatiate
As on these humblest to have set thy mark,
And merged, at once, France and a fishing-bark?

SONG IN EXILE

A quoi ce proscrit pense-t-il?

Thoughts of an exile — what be they?
Thoughts of his ploughshare, of his hoe,
Thoughts of his barley-field or hay,
Thoughts of his country's pride brought low.
Ah, the mere memory can slay!
While senators receive their pay,
The banished wretch must pine and pray.
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

The workman of the work-bench dreams,
And of his hut the laborer;
The panes are bright, the fireside gleams,
The flower-pots are on the stair,
And in the nook the grandam's bed;
All its adornment the two pair
Of tassels worn, of woollen thread.
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

There bees sought honey in the spring;
Sparrows, partakers of the sky,
Ran in the rye-crops, twittering;
They robbed our fields, those felons sly,
Boldly, like eagles on the wing;
A ruined castle stood hard by.
Founded while Pepin yet was king.
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

The workman plied the file, the plane,
A wife and children to maintain;

He toiled from dawn till eventide,
And toil brought solace in its train,
And fire from heaven, and light beside.
Such was, when they were young, the lot
Of Papin, and Jacquard, and Watt.
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

The artisan on holidays
Left in the pound the brood of care,
And humming scraps of springtide lays,
With cap a-peak, and blouse blown free,
Off he went to the barrier;
Feasted on dubious rabbit, there,
And drank like Counts in Hungary.
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

On Sundays, too, the husbandman
Hallooed to Jacqueline or Jeanne,
Crying, "Come, Jeanne — come, Jacqueline,
Put on your best laced cap and hood."
And then they danced upon the green.
The flowers were dinted by the tread
Not of silk shoes, but shoes of wood.
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

The exiles wander far, and muse,
And lead a life that's maimed and marred.
Their eyes are fixed upon the yews
That shade the graves in the graveyard:
And one recalls the Tuscan strand,
Another Poland the ill-starred,
And one the German fatherland.

Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

And one, awearied of the sky,
Lay dying. Calm and steadfast-eyed
He closed the page. "Nay, wherefore die?"
"Wherefore be living?" he replied.
"Farewell; by dying freed am I;
A Scapin-tyrant, Nero-knave,
Holds France in fetters of a slave."
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

"I die of grief no more to see
The meadows where I met the dawn,
No more to hear the minstrelsy
Of singing birds upon the lawn.
My heart is where I cannot be.
Out of four pine-boards make my bed
And in the prairie bury me."
Man cannot live without man's bread;
Without their native land men are as good as dead.

SUNRISE

Il est des jours abjects où, séduits par la joie

Foul times there are, when nations spiritless
Throw honour away
For tinsel glory; to base happiness
A mournful prey.

Then from the nations, fain of lustful rest,
Dull slavery's dreams,
All virtue ebbs, as from a sponge tight-pressed
Clear water streams.

Then men, to vice and folly docile slaves,
Aye lowly inclined,
Ape the vile fearful reed that stoops and waves
For every wind.

Then feasts and kisses; nought that saith the soul
Stirs shame or dread;
One drinks, one eats, one sings, one skips,— is foul
And comforted.

Crime, ministered to by loathsome lackeys, reigns;
Yea, 'neath God's fires
Laughs; and ye shiver, sombre dread remains
Of glorious sires.

All life seems foul, with vice intoxicate,
Aye thus to be: —
Sudden a clarion unto all winds elate
Peals Liberty!

And the dull world, whose soul this blast doth smite,
Is like to one
Drunken all night, upstaggering 'neath the light
O' the risen sun!

AFTER THE COUP D'ÉTAT

Devant les trahisons.

Before foul treachery and heads bent down,
I'll fold mine arms, indignant but serene.
O faith in fallen things,— be thou my crown,
My force, my joy, the prop on which I lean:

Yes, whilst *he's* there, or struggle some, or fall,
O France, dear France, for whom I weep in vain.

Tomb of my sires, nest of my loves,— my all,
I ne'er shall see thee with these eyes again.

I shall not see thy sad, sad sounding shore,
France, save my duty, I shall all forget;
Amongst the true and tried, I'll tug mine oar,
And rest proscribed to spurn the fawning set.

O bitter exile, hard, without a term,
Thee I accept, nor seek nor care to know
Who have down-truckled 'mid the men deemed firm,
And who have fled, that should have fought the foe.

If true a thousand stand, with them I stand;
A hundred? 'tis enough: we'll Sylla brave;
Ten? put my name down foremost in the band;
One? Well, alone,— until I find my grave.

LUX

I.

Temps futurs! vision sublime

O FUTURE! Fair vision of light!
The nations win free of the night,
The desert is all passed o'er.
After the sand-drifts, the plains;
And earth is a bride in love-chains,
'Tis man they are suffered for!

Even now the uplifted eye
Sees clearly fair dreams float by
Which one day shall shine and not move:

For God will cast off the chain-weight,
For the past hath a fell name,— Hate!
But the name of the future is Love!

Even now through our darkling woes
The bride-blush of the Peoples glows;
'Mid our sombre branches takes wing
— Like a hornet, glad dawn awakes —
Progress, the bee; and the brakes
Yield honey for them that shall sing.

Oh, behold! the deep night is drunk up.
O'er the world which hath shattered the cup
Empoisoned, of Cæsars, of kings,—
O'er rapt, proud nations made bright
For marriage, in azure light
Peace spreads her vast, steadfast wings.

O free France, arisen at last!
O robe unstained with the past!
O glad for the sorrowful hours!
A sound as of loved labour stirs,
The sweet heaven smiles, and one hears
New song-notes from hawthorn bowers!

Rust gnaws the stern arms of old war.
Of your cannons with thunderous roar,
Great captains, scarce so much remains
As might serve a cup to fill
For a bird with bright eager bill
With the sparkling feast of clear rains.

Revenges bear here no part;
Every true heart-thought, every heart,
That the same beat hath, the same word,

Make one only consummate sheaf —
God takes to bind this with a wreath
Of the disused tocsin the cord.

In the depth of the heavens a star
Behold, it gains glory afar,
Comes nearer,— bright station hath won!
O Republic, great mother of all,
Though now but a spark so small,
Soon, soon, thou'lt out-dazzle the sun!

O exiles! True men whom fate tries,
My comrades so valiant and true,
Ofttimes, near the fountains that rise,
I have chanted this song unto you.

Ofttimes, having hearkened my song,
You have said to me: "Take thy hope hence!
We are they that endure the world-wrong;
More black than the thunder cloud dense.

"What may it teach us, this night?
That the just bears the chastisement! —
That virtue is roused, and her sight
On the God of yon heaven is bent.

"God hides, and the darkness is here,
Alas! and foul crime is enthroned;
She, seeing whom heaven holds dear,
Whom smites, hath loud pæans entoned.

"To us all unknown are His ways.
How may this God of the nations
Gather such manifold praise
From such manifold desolations!

"His workings seem not at one
With the hope that once shone in His
eyes. . . ."
But who then, my brothers, hath won
The secret of Him in the skies?

Who then hath traversed wide space,
The water, the air, fire, the sod,
And the region where spirits embrace?
Who can say: "I have seen High God!

"I have seen Jehovah! His name
I know; He hath filled me with fires!
I know how He fashioned man's frame,
And all breathing things He inspires.

"I have seen that vast Hand unknown
Which opens and leaves winter free,
With the thunders deep in the cloud zone,
And the tempest upon the loud sea,

"Stretch and bow the vast, livid night;
Wake to life an immortal soul;
Support in the Void the fixed might
Of the star-burthened uttermost pole;

"Lead silent the fateful hour;
To the feast of the rose crowned king
The black guest, Death, without flower,
Without song, without welcome, bring;

"Weave deftly the spider's net,
Ripen the fruit, paint the flower,
Lead the hosts of the star worlds, and yet
Lose not one, at the twilight hour;

"Stay the brimmed wave at the shore;
With roses make June beautiful;
Time, living water, outpour
From eternity's urns ever full;

"By a breath, with its every star,
Make in its mightiness
Shiver vast heaven afar,
As a shepherd's tent with wind stress;

"Link light to bright light in the skies
With countless invisible chains. . . .
All things I have seen with mine eyes,
Unknown to me nothing remains!"

Who can say that? Not one.
In our soul night, night in our eyes!
A vain breath is man, soon done —
God communes alone in His skies.

O doubt not! Have faith! Not yet is the close.
Let us wait. Of kings, as of panthers, God knows
How to shatter the wild beast fang.
He but proves us, my friends! Have faith, be ye calm,
And press forward! O desert, cool spreads your green palm,
Though 'tis smit with the dire noon pang!

Because He doth not his whole work in an hour,—
To the jesuit gives Jesus, gives Rome to the power
Of the priest, the good to the ill,
We should therefore despair? Of Him, the Vast Just!
No, no,! He alone hath the harvest in trust
Who alone hath the seed-time at will.

Oh, is not He steadfast? Oh, is not He sure?
This world, whereon ever our blind souls pore,
Doth He fill not from depth to height?
What *we* call wisdom is vanity;
Before His face all the shadows shall flee,—
His countenance veilèd with light.

Doth He see not huge snakes on their bellies creep?
Scans He not even to their deepest deep
The caves of the highest height?
Doth He know not the hour when the crane lifts wing;
And, O tiger, thy crouching,— O tiger, thy spring,—
And, O lion, thy lair in the night?

Answer, O swallow,— gold eagle, with song
In the rush of thy wings, by His breath borne along
Are ye not? Stag, art fleet Him to flee?
Shy fox, see you not His bright eyes in the brake?
Lean wolf, when you feel in the dark a bush shake,
Do you tremble not, saying —"'Tis He!"

Since He knoweth all this; since o'er all He hath power;
Since effect from each cause, as the fruit from the flower,
His fingers resistless aye draw;
Since the worm He hath set in the bark of the tree,
Since He makes in the night wind proud columns to be
As feeble as wisps of dry straw;

Since He smites ocean vast like a bellowing beast;
Since He is the seer, while man ne'er hath ceased
To grope in the darkness, stone blind;

Since His arm is earth's pillar, and since in fire-
flight
The fierce comet far flickers, as even in midnight
A torch blown upon by the wind;

Since the wan night has knowledge,— ay, since the
dense shade
Beholds blooming beauteous the star He hath made,—
Shall *we* alone doubt, that He sees?
We, steadfast and pure, in our agony proud,
Stiff-backèd alway to the foul tyrant-crowd,
And only for Him on our knees!

More nobly let's think. Full bitter our days;
But when our weak hands through the dark we up-
raise,
Feel we not a Hand, succouring, strong?
Since we walked, bowed down in this martyr shade,
Have we heard not oft One behind us Who said:
"Go forward, the night is not long."

O exiles, the future's the People's! Peace, light,
And liberty, throned as on chariots fire-bright
Will flash through the path of the skies:
This crime triumphant is smoke, and but seems;
I swear it to you,— I, the dreamer who dreams
'Neath God's heaven with lifted eyes.

Than the proud sea-waves they are prouder, these
kings;
But lo, God saith! "In their nostrils my rings
I will put, and my bit 'twixt loud lips;
I will chariot them, in tameness or strife,—
Them and their harlots, their players o' the fife,—
In the shadow, my death — eclipse!"

God speaks: and the rock where they planted their throne
Crumbles; and lo! as a breath they are strewn
With less sound than leaves torn from the trees.
O wind, wild wind! that art rattling our doors,
Say, is it thou that dost bear them — all yours
Is the sorry burthen of these?

O Exiles, *so* fair is earth's destiny!
The waves of night borne backward shall be
By the billows resistless of day;
No foam shall remain of them, never again
Shall storm with their bitterness earth's shore stain —
Ebbed are they forever and aye!

Not only o'er France shall the Glory star shine,
But on all the nations; not one shall repine
In the fetters of slavery.
Released for aye from his darkling doom,
Driven out erst by night, to his home shall come,
'Neath the dawn star, Humanity.

Like meteors fire fed with the breath of night,
All tyrants shall perish at birth of light,
And lo! in their stead, fair-fixt
In heaven which cloudless o'er earth shall brood,
Two suns shall we see — man's brotherhood,
And the brotherhood of Christ!

Yes, to all I repeat it, to all I declare,
— O clarion of song bear this truth through the air! —
All strife upon earth shall cease.

For war is a scourge only brandished of Kings;
And Kings are no more; while Freedom spreads wings,
And one is called Love, one Peace.

O'er all earth to the uttermost isle of the sea,
Lo! the sacred boughs of life's loveliest tree,
Progress, outspread to the light!
Boon heaven fosters its branches alway,
Fulfilled with the shining of doves all day,
With the burning of stars all night.

And we shall be dead — dead, haply, as now!
But, O brothers, O martyrs, then shall we not know
The sun sees on earth no slave!
While Life's Tree towers above us with flower and fruit,
Shall we wake not to set one faint kiss on its root
That draws life from us even in the grave!

TO THE CANNON "VICTOR HUGO"

[Bought with the proceeds of Readings of "Les Châtiments" during the Siege of Paris.]

Thou deadly crater, moulded by my muse,
Cast thou thy bronze into my bowed and wounded heart,
And let my soul its vengeance to thy bronze impart!

LES CHANSONS DES RUES ET DES BOIS

1865

LES CHANSONS DES RUES ET DES BOIS

THE HORSE

Je l'avais saisi par la bride

I was holding him fast by the bridle,
In knots stood each muscle and vein,
My brow was all lined with my efforts
His headlong career to restrain.

A horse of a glorious lineage,
Astarte-like born of the foam,
Daily fed from Aurora's bright chalice,
Brought straight from her own starry home.

A steed mighty and grand in his movements,
Untamable, bounding on high,
Ever filling, with resonant neighings,
The vault of the deep azure sky.

To heaven each genius his bowl lifts,
And kindling his torch from the sky,
On the back of this wonderful monster
Is seated and borne up on high.

All thy poets and prophets in order
Thou knowest, O earth, by the scars
Of the burnings received from his harness
Which shineth all over with stars.

He inspireth each ode and each epic,
  Conceiving most terrible things,
As the sword flashes out from its scabbard,
  And crimes from the bosom of kings.

As creator, and source of each fountain,
  He makes the rock open and speak,
With its Rephidim for the old Hebrew,
  And Hippocrene for the wise Greek.

Through the pale Revelation he hurries
  With Death and Despair on his back,
And the shade of his great gloomy pinion
  Turns the moon over Tenedos black.

Amos' wail and the wrath of Achilles,
  His nostrils inflate as is meet,
And the rhythm of Æschylus' verses,
  'Tis the march of his galloping feet.

Lo! he bends down the tree o'er the dead fruit,
  As a mother does, weeping alone;
He hews out of marble a Rachel,
  Or a Niobe fashions in stone.

When he starts, the ideal is his goal,
  Mane streaming and course ever fleet;
In front the Impossible yawning
  Alone checks the rush of his feet.

Swifter far than the lightning he rushes,
  On Pindus he seats himself strong,
The Bear he relieves of his burden,
  As he draws the gold chariot along.

He sports in the heavens undaunted,
And plunges due north to the Pole;
Him the Zodiac, in circle revolving,
Nigh crushes in ponderous roll.

God created the gulf for his pleasure,
And gave the wild skies to his will,
His flight in the gloom and the shadow,
His path through the lightning-cleft hill.

Through the dense mists of heaven he wanders,
And loves, as he moves on his way,
To fly till the thick murky darkness
Shrinks back from the presence of day.

And the fierce glaring look of his eyeballs,
Brought back from his mystic career,
He fixes on man, that bare atom,
And fills him with terror and fear.

He's not docile, but hard to be guided,
As many a poet will find,
Who may use him to leap o'er a chasm
Which cannot be bridged by the mind.

And the grooms who attend in his stable,
Are men of both talent and soul;
The first place is given to Orpheus,
With Chénier last on the roll.

All our soul and spirit he governs;
Ezekiel waits him with awe,
And it is from the floor of his stable
That patient Job gathers his straw.

Nought but woe to the man he surprises,
Ill fortune attends all his play;
He resembles the last days of Autumn,
When weariness reigneth alway.

From his back he's flung many a rider,
He loathes both the bit and the rein,
He delights to be held as a monster,
Nor thinks of his rider again.

He exhibits nor mercy nor patience,
But leaves far behind on his track
All the rash and adventurous spirits
Who mounted in vain on his back.

His flanks with their myriads of sparklets,
Bear him on in his pride and his might;
Though Despréaux or daring Quintilian
Have ventured to curb him in flight.

But I dragged him from rapt contemplation
Of gods, and of crimes, and of kings,
The sad horse of the gulf and the darkness,
To fields where the soft Idyll springs.

Then I drew him towards the sweet meadow,
Where the sunrise had just given birth
To an eclogue of loving and kissing,
And turned to an Eden this earth.

In a valley, not far from the meadow,
Where Plautus and Racan compose,
The epigram blooms like a hawthorn,
And that trefoil, the triolet, grows.

Abbé Chaulieu can there take his sermon,
And Segrais can gather fresh bays,
From the tender green grass 'neath the bushes,
To inspire him with musical lays.

The horse struggled, his eyeballs shot lightnings
Like sheen of a yataghan's blade,
His flanks heaved like the breath of the tempest,
When wind against tide is arrayed.

For he longed to return to the unknown,
To break from this earth and its ties,
With the sulphurous reek in his nostrils,
And the soul of the world in his eyes.

Loud he neighed as if looking for rescue
From all the invisible worlds;
And from heaven, as though in swift answer,
The thunderbolt crashing was hurled.

And the raving Bacchantes all joined
In the yell that went up to the skies,
Whilst a long line of solemn-faced Sphinxes
Stood gazing with calm steady eyes.

And the stars that in heaven's vault shimmer,
All quivered on hearing his cry,
As a lamp in a woman's weak fingers,
When the evening breezes are high.

And each time that with wings black and gloomy,
He beat on the dull cloudy sky,
All the clusters of stars in the shadow
Away to the infinite fly.

But my firm grasp I never relinquished,
And showed him the meadow of Dreams,
Where all Nature is gay and seductive,
And the firefly in cool grottoes gleams.

And I showed him the field, and the shadow,
The grassplots made verdant by June,
The place that bards think of as Eden,
In whose praises their harps they attune.

"Tell me, what are you doing?" said Virgil,
Who by the spot happened to pass,
And I answered, "It's Pegasus, Master,
I'm taking to turn out to grass."

ORDER OF DAY FOR FLORÉAL

Victoire, amis! je dépêche

Victory, friends! I give wing
In haste, in the full breathed morn,
To strophes that gleefully sing
The night by the light o'erborne.

I blow a blast on the hills,
A blast of rapturous might:
Know all, that the fair spring fills
With lilies the footprints of night.

Jane slippers her soft white feet,
Her feet that no longer are frail.
Lo, how the sun's pulses beat,
Fulfilling yon heaven's blue vale!

The plumed birds sing, lambs bleat;
May, mocking with cries night powers,
Puts winter in full retreat
With a mitrailleuse of flowers.

LOVE OF THE WOODLAND

Orphée, au bois du Caystre

Orpheus, in Cayster's tangled
Woodways, 'neath the stars' pale light,
Heard the laughter weird and jangled
Of the viewless ones of night.

Phtas, the Theban sibyl, dreaming
Nigh the hushed Phygalian heights,
Saw on far horizon streaming
Ebon forms 'mong silvery lights.

Æschylus, soft hazes threading
Of sweet Sicily, soul-subdued
Wandered beneath moonbeams shedding
Mellow flute-notes through the wood.

Pliny, lo! — high thoughts denying
For Miletus' nymphs most fair,—
Dainty rosy limbs espying,
Begs a boon of the amorous air.

Plautus, nigh Viterbo, straying
Through the orchard bowers sun-bright,
In each palm gold fruit is weighing
Such as gods rejoiced to bite.

Ah, Versailles! Haunt most delightful!
Faunus there, one foot i' the wave,
While Boileau waxed shrill and spiteful,
Golden rhymes to Molière gave.

Dante, sombre souled, abiding
Scathless in the deepest hell,
Turned to watch fair women gliding
Thro' the boughs 'neath eve's calm spell.

Chénier, under willows sleeping,
Saw in dream a vision sweet:
Lovely lasses laughing, weeping,
For whom Virgil's heart quick beat

Shakespeare, watching 'neath the lazy
Branches of the forest lord,
Heard, while blusht each meadow daisy,
Fairy trippings, o'er green sward.

O deep woodlands, soul entrancing,
Haunted yet by Gods are ye!
Yet the goat-foot Satyr's dancing
To Pan's rustic melody!

SUMMER MORNING

Aux champs, la nuit est vénérable

Solemn is midnight on the hills;
Day smiles with an ingenuous air;
The ash, the maple evening stills
To slumber. Eventide is fair;

But morning — morning is the time
For rapture! In what glory of mist

Night melts! It makes the churl sublime;
It dazzles the diplomatist.

Slowly the stars in heaven fade,
Gold blossoms in the azure wold.
Below, the cornflowers gleam through shade
Blue stars upon a field of gold.

The small birds run, the oxen low;
The leaves are charmed by sorcery;
The winds in wider circles blow
Amid the mounting brilliancy.

Airs shiver; waves more loudly roar;
Their inner thought all hearts confess;
And the whole universe once more
Awakes to life and consciousness.

NOT A WHIT NOW DO I CARE

Je ne mets pas en peine

Not a whit now do I care
For the belfry or the steeple;
If the queen be dark or fair,
King rule well or ill his people;

None more ignorant, I own,
If the lord be proud or meek,
If the parish parson drone
Doggrel Latin or good Greek;

If't be time for dance or weeping,
Nests be empty or brimmed above;
Other cares keep me from sleeping —
I am head o'er heels in love.

Listen, Jane, my troublous dream!
'Tis thy tiny foot so white
Tripping o'er the happy stream
Light as bird in hovering flight.

Listen, Jane, my dreadful pain!
'Tis that thus through sun and shower
An unseen, resistless chain
Draws me aye to thy bright bower.

Listen, Jane, my source of sorrow!
'Tis that thy rare smiles alway,
Beaming brightlier from to-morrow,
Lure me from the bright to-day.

Listen, Jane, my source of pleasure!
Thy skirt's smallest flower I prize,
A far richer, sweeter treasure
Than all stars that deck the skies.

JANE SINGING

Jeanne chante; elle se penche

JANE is singing; soaring, stooping, as a bird from tree to tree,
So from stave to stave she passes, and the music pleases me.

What was that she sang of to me? With her flower on her breast
And the morning in her eyes, what was it that her song expressed?

Was she warbling of the standard, tented field and
war's renown?
Or of how much silk it takes to trim a hat to match
her gown?

Did she set herself to do it — to awake the hidden
flame
Lit by Heaven among the pulses of this trembling
human frame?

Nay, I know not. Was it psalm or ballad? I am
listening still.
Me the quiristers of daybreak cause to feel the self-
same thrill.

I was feasting, I was longing with an eagerness un-
told;
I was fain to crown my forehead with a diadem of
gold;

Fain to gaze upon her beauties, to annex her days to
mine;
Fain to pluck the stars from heaven — aid me, O you
powers divine!

I was drunken with her charm; of such love-sickness
men have died;
Oh I felt my soul was ready to unfold and blossom
wide!

For that wits should be distracted and fly off in
dreams of bliss
Needed but the touch of feather of a bird so sweet
as this.

THIS LOVELY SPOT

Ces lieux sont purs; tu les complètes

This lovely spot you make complete.
This wood that so secluded seems,
Seems to have made its violets sweet
With your eyes' innocent tears and beams.

Dawn hath your rosy flush of youth;
O Jane, you prove the happy part,
That in all nature's beauty and truth
Hath all year long a truthful heart.

Now all its gifts this vale hath spread
For only you, in humble wise;
There is a halo round your head
Converts each path to Paradise.

While every timid woodland thing
With wondering gaze draws nigh to you,
Knowing that if you smile or sing
'Tis angel-sweet and angel-true.

O Jane, you are so sweet, so dear,
That when you rove these wood-ways blest,
Betwixt green tremulous leaflets peer
Small downy heads from mossy nest!

FALLING STARS

Les deux amants, sous la nue

Lovers twain beneath the night,
Dream a young and happy pair;
Through the sky-space infinite,
Suns are seeded everywhere,

Athwart th' heav'n's loud-sounding dome,
  While from night's extremest way
Showers of sparkling dawn-dust roam
  Stars that pass and fade away.

Heaps of falling stars are shed
  Through the vast dark zenith high;
Kindled ash, which censers spread,
  Incense of infinity.

And beneath, which dews bedew,
  Showing pinks and violets shy;
Yellow primrose, pansy blue,
  Lilies, glory of July.

By the cool mist, nearly drowned,
  Lies the meadow far away,
Girded by the forest round,
  Shivering, so that one would say,

That the earth, 'neath veil of showers
  Which the tear-wet forest sheds,
Wide its apron, decked with flowers,
  To receive the stars outspreads.

THE MARLY OAK

Ne me plains pas, me dit l'arbre

This was what the old tree said:
  "No, you need not pity me.
True, palace, monarch and all were made
  Of marble about me formerly;

I looked out on the Grand Promenade,
  And the Twelve Cæsars in a row,

And the stone car on the façade
With its rearing horses, long ago.

Under the twilight of the trees
Shading their majesties' private lawn
I saw the statues, Hercules,
Hebe and Psyche, Nymph and Faun.

I heard the huntsmen wind their quarry;
The Queen I saw taking the air;
An oak-tree and high dignitary,
I had the entries everywhere.

An iron railing, a thing of taste,
Fenced me off from the common grass;
The soil is apt to be defaced,
When trespassed on by the ox and ass.

Pasture was vulgar, then, to me;
Agriculture I fancied low.
'Every self-respecting tree
Keeps apart from the fields, you know.'

So propriety would say
Under my branches, in set form.
Far was I from the beaten way
Where the uncultured people swarm.

'Twas fashion made me remain apart;
For it is the A B C of it,
To shut nature — yes, and art,
Up in a close, and turn the key of it.

"Hearts have I witnessed — that were rovers;
Warriors — like turtle-doves;

Women called beauties — by their lovers;
Lovers called heroes — by their loves.

Watching them pass me, great and little,
Male and female, my temper rose;
And my branches are much more brittle
Than you might easily suppose.

Beauties, praised in a general way,
Met with occasional criticism.
Heroes, of no common clay,
Clapt a clog on their heroism.

Wars being deadly, it was clever
Of a courageous king to find
Some Boileau solicitous ever
To pull him backwards from behind.

Reasons of state are serious things;
Now and then it was the way with them
To fasten cart-ropes round their kings,
For fear their courage should go astray with them.

"I have seen gnashing his teeth and prowling,
Out of the way of the rude equerries,
A thing called a court-poet, howling
In couplets to the elderberries.

At Marly they were in fashion;
Wildly they wandered here and there,
Their fists clenched, their eyes all passion,
Made up of fiction — and of hair.

They put on airs almost judicial,
And turned out verses very tame;
And their phrases were artificial,
And their head of hair the same.

"Even when the enemy won,
Eyes remained in a dazzled state;
The great King Louis was still the Sun;
God was another Louis the Great.

Bossuet's tone was very flat;
Racine must be rounding a period;
Corneille only, beneath his hat,
Darted a glance aside at God.

That is the way mankind are bred;
They find the world supremely good,
If they but have above their head
A heaven of carved and gilded wood.

"Through the park no foot could pass;
No living thing could trespass on it;
You might number the blades of grass
As you count the words in a sonnet.

Farewell jigs and blackberries!
How much smaller everything gets!
Le Notre planting quincunxes —
Lulli composing his minuets!

Square-clipped yews, ungracefully shaped,
Seemed tricked out in cassock and band;
The flowers humbly bowed and scraped;
The trees did reverence, hat in hand.

Out of respect to the Sun-king
At Rheims commended to God's mercies,
The branches of the oak, poor thing,
Were trimmed like Alexandrine verses.

"All that period made me fret.
What with spite and ostentation,
Dwarfish seemed more dwarfish yet
In its exalted situation.

After an age of periwigs
An age of hair-powder succeeds;
The flour goes flying in whirligigs
Over a people no man feeds.

Art wears powder, à la mode;
Voltaire, loyal at most in word,
Tenders to Louis Quinze an Ode
Cockscombed after the Royal Bird.

Opinion is suppressed with gags;
Majesty plays the fool, and dotes;
Overhead a ceiling sags,
A royalty of three petticoats.

A trap-door opens, one fine day;
The ground being hollow under the traps,
Quick as a footpad runs away
The whole gay world is in collapse.

All these kings, the revel, the rout,
In the time that a swarm of flies
Buzzes past me, are wiped out.
Everything around me dies.

"As for me, it moves me not.
I take shelter behind God's wings;
The court is gone, but I keep the grot;
I have wolves, where I had kings.

I am become true oak again;
I broaden in the warm noon-tides.
Eighty-nine rubs off its chain
Against the roughness of my sides.

Freedom and I are reconciled;
I have said good-bye to shame;
I prefer the plants run wild
To humanity grown tame.

I have foregone the Nuncio,
And all the world of dignities
And of fashion; but I grow
Upward, onward, into the skies.

Orgulous, effete, irate,
These fine folks may jeer at me.
I am content to derogate
In the stars' good company."

TO ROSITA

Tu ne veux pas aimer, méchante?

So, you won't love, you naughty thing,
And all the spring is dismal made;
Hear you not how the bird doth sing
In the deep forest's pleasant shade?

If love be missing, Eden dies;
For beauty springs from love alone,

Blue when the sun doth shine, the skies
Are blackened o'er if he be gone.

Faded and lost your charms will prove,
If you such foolishness prolong:
The bird sings that we ought to love,
And he can sing no other song.

BY SILENCE SHE THE BATTLE WON

Son silence fut mon vainqueur

By silence she the battle won,
Thence did my passion for her spring
My heart at first, perceived alone,
A scarce felt fluttering of the wing.

Together in the wood we drove,
Each eve, far distant from the throng;
I talked, and other voices strove,
Filling the forest with their song.

Her eyes were full of mystery,
Her dove-like wondrous eyes, which have
The depth unfathomed of the sky,
The dawn, as of the silent grave.

Still not a word did she bestow,
Silent and pensive, on we roll —
When, all at once, I felt the blow,
And a winged arrow pierced my soul.

Ah! what is love? — no wisdom tells —
The silent maid, who only smiles;
The cavern is, where hidden dwells
The little archer full of wiles.

ANGRY ROSA

Une querelle. Pourquoi?

A QUARREL? Why this scolding, pray?
Good Heavens! because they're lovers still.
Sweet words had scarcely died away
When quickly followed words of ill.

Each heart depends on its own cord;
The sky's o'ercast, the sunbeams flee,
Love's like the air, a foolish word
Brings rain, when lovers disagree.

'Tis as when roving through the glade,
Whose leaves are gilt by sunny June,
We wander fearless in the shade,
Knowing the sun will shine forth soon.

Though darkness may our steps o'ershroud,
And fierce and bitter blows the blast,
Yet silver lining sheens each cloud,
And soon the storm is overpast.

IN THE ABBEY RUINS

Seuls tous deux, ravis, chantants!

Two together, laughing, loving — how they sing!
Plucking sweets of God's own sowing, buds of spring.

What a ripple of laughter, flashing in the shades
Once the home of aching hearts, of hooded maids!

'Tis a couple newly wedded, girl and boy,
Sounding all the many witching chords of joy;

Sporting, child-like, with the zephyrs of the west;
Sports to which the convent's blackness adds a zest.

They have strewn the step with jasmine petals, where
Anciently the abbess joined her hands in prayer.

Gravestones marked with crosses help them in their play;
Stinging-nettles get a little in their way.

Hide and seek among the ruins — love as well;
Dawn upon the darkness of the cloistered cell.

Off they hurry; billing, cooing; much in love;
Kiss, and kiss again; within — without — above,

In the archways, or behind the buttresses;
'Tis the story of the birds among the trees.

FROM WOMAN TO HEAVEN

L'âme a des étapes profondes

The storehouse of the souls is vast;
At first we're charmed, and then at last
Convinced. Two worlds, they stand apart:
The last the mind, the first the heart.

To love, to understand. The heart
Stops at the first, like birds that dart
Through lowly valleys, but the soul
Flies upward to the higher goal.

The lover takes th' Archangel's place,
A kiss, and then all Nature's face

Is instant changed from gloom of night
To dazzling palace of delight.

Let love pervade the whole earth through,
Even to the sprig bedecked with dew
That fallen lies; for, wondrous thing!
It forms a nest when comes the Spring.

Draw back the veil, and let us see
That blessed nest on woodland tree.
And that nest will become a light
In forest of the infinite.

THE SOWER

C'est le moment crépusculaire

Sitting in a porchway cool,
Sunlight, I see dying fast,
Twilight hastens on to rule —
Working hours have well-nigh past.

Shadows shoot across the lands:
But a sower lingers still,
Old, in rags, he patient stands,
Looking on, I feel a thrill.

Black and high his silhouette
Dominates the furrows deep!
Now to sow the task is set,
Soon shall come a time to reap.

Marches he along the plain,
To and fro, he scatters wide
From his hand the precious grain;
Muse I, as I see him stride.

Darkness deepens. Fades the light.
Now his gestures to mine eyes
Are august; and strange — his height
Seems to touch the starry skies.

BABY'S SLEEP AT DAWN

L'humble chambre a l'air de sourire

Faint smiles the humble little room,
On an old chest some roses blush;
Beholding here dissolve night's gloom,
Priests had said, Peace! and women, Hush!

Yonder what small recess is seen,
Whereto the tenderest radiance creeps?
O, more than angel guard serene!
Aurora watches; baby sleeps.

Deep in that nook a tiny thing
Lies lulled within a cradle white;
Amid the shadow quivering
Heaven only knows with what delight.

Lo, in her dimpled hand tight prest
She holds a toy, sweet source of mirth!
Cherubs in heaven with palms are blest,
Babies with rattles upon earth.

What sleep is hers! Ah, who dare say
What dreams make such smiles come and go;
Haply she sees some bright dawnway
With angels passing to and fro.

Her rosy arm moves momently
As if to wave some sweet adieu;
Gentle her breathing as may be
A butterfly's amid the blue.

Aurora's loth to chase those dreams:
Naught's so august, so pure, so mild,
As this bright eye of God that beams
Upon the closed eyes of a child.

AN OUT-DOORS HUMOURIST

Au fond du parc qui se délabre

Deep in the depths of an old enclosure,
Wild and waste, but pretty enough
When the moon upon oak and osier
Shines like a candle long in the snuff,
There a sparrow in all his glory
Keeps his family magazine,
Open wide, on an oak's fifth story
April has just repainted green.

A weeping willow, of mood lymphatic,
Leans on the greensward and sighs in the breeze,
Some few paces off from the attic
Where the rascal chuckles at ease.
The willow branches droop, afflicted,
Over a pond of a rood or less,
Wherein their outlines are depicted
Feature by feature, tress by tress.

Jack the sparrow, visiting Jinny
In her nest lit up by the morn,

Chaffs the willow, treats as a ninny
This Wordsworthian all forlorn.
He cries to all the half-fledged starlings
Among the leaflets shaking a limb,
"Look at the pond, you little darlings;
The tree has wept it full to the brim!"

By the pool, with a splash and splutter,
Down he comes, and begins to gibe;
"You are a very stupid gutter;
Have you nothing new to describe?
Fast in a waggon-rut you grovel,
Flat as a willow-pattern plate.
Change your fashion to something novel!
These lank osiers are out of date.

"Your Georgic is dull, I give you warning.
'Only a mirror,' you explain?
Result: one willow, every morning;
Every night the same, again.
A classic theme? but a bore, a bogey!
I had rather the theme was mute.
Willow, indeed! An old-fogy;
A member of the Institute!

"I see the very gudgeon yawning.
'Tis dismal, pond; you irritate me,
Lying, with weeds dishevelled, fawning
Thus at the foot of a bald old tree.
Give me something new for my whistle!
Do your tracing, but with less pose;
Suppose me ass — well, make a thistle!
Suppose me maiden — make me a rose!"

Then he addresses the green linnet;
"See, this willow, on the green sod,

Knows the world but to note, within it,
The devil perched by the side of God.
But I prefer, the wood being spacious,
To flit from thicket to brake, my dears,
Rather than pass my life, good gracious!
Filling a foot-bath with my tears."

The willow is silent, stiff and stately,
Black as the wood of the gallows-tree;
And old dame Nature smiles sedately
At every quip and quiddity
Over the rock-work, the detritus,
The quincunxes, the straggling quicks,
Hurled at this rustic Heraclitus
By this Democritus of chicks.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

Depuis six mille ans la guerre

For centuries past this war madness
Has laid hold of each combative race;
Whilst our God takes but heed of the flower,
And that sun, moon, and stars keep their place.

The sight of the heavens above us,
The bird's nest and lily-like snow,
Drive not from the brain of us mortals
The war thirst, with its feverish glow.

We love but the field with its carnage,
And the strife which turns earth into hell,
And eager for glory, the people
Would not change the fierce drum for church bell.

The vain aspirations of glory,
With banners and cars of bright gold,
Draw tears from the widows and orphans,
As often has happened of old.

Our natures have changed to brute fierceness;
"Forward! — die!" bursts from each angry throat,
Whilst our lips seem to mimic the music
Of the echoing war-trumpet's note.

Steel flashes, the bivouacs are smoking,
As with pale brows we eagerly run.
The thoughtful are driven to madness
By the flash and the roar of the gun.

Our lives are but spent for the glory
Of the kings who smile over our grave,
And build up a fabric of friendship
With cement from the blood of the brave.

While the beasts of the field and the vultures
Come in search of their banquet of hell,
And they strip the red flesh from the bodies
That lie stiff and stark where they fell.

Each man's hand is raised 'gainst his neighbour,
Whilst he strives all his wrath to excite,
And trades on our natural weakness
To inveigle us into the fight.

"A Russian, quick, cut down the villain,
Put your sword through that murderous Croat.
How dare they from our men to differ,
Or venture to wear a white coat?"

"I slay fellow-creatures and go on
My life's path. What glory like mine?
Their crime is most black and most heinous,
They live on the right of the Rhine."

"For Rosbach and Waterloo, vengeance,"
The cry maddens the heart and the brain;
Men long for the fierce glow of battle
And the blood that is poured forth like rain.

In peace we could drink from the fountains,
Or calmly repose in the shade,
But our brethren in battle to slaughter
Is a pleasure which never will fade.

The lust for blood spilling incites us
To rush madly o'er valleys and plains;
The vanquished are crying in terror,
And are clasping our swift horses' manes.

And yet I ask sometimes in wonder,
As I wander the meadows among,
Can brother for brother feel hatred
As he hears the lark's musical song?

THE ASCENT OF MAN

Tandis qu'au loin des nuées

CUMULI, fantastic Edens, move along the distant blue.
I the while attend your wisdom. This is what I glean from you.

"What ideas are yours of man — that he can succour God's desire?
As if man were the dispenser, say of water, air or fire!

Is it so, that in his awmry you have seen him, with your eyes,
Stow the rolls of satin hangings wherewith morning drapes the skies?

Is it he can heave and sink and say 'No further' to the main?
Is it he can make the elements in arms obey his rein?

Does he know the grass's riddle? Speaks he to the quickened nest?
Will he blend his blatant keynote with the clarion of the west?

Does the salt sonorous ocean fear the spur, when he is by?
Does he understand the meteor? Can he comprehend the fly?

Man to succour God! This dreaming, shifting phantom of a night!
Is it thanks to man's poor hyssop that the swan's down keeps its white?

Fate decrees, man acquiesces. Man can neither make nor mar.
Have you seen his nippers clipping jasmine petals to a star?

Banish God and then imagine — strive — discover — thicken out

With the mysteries of Eleusis threads of Eleatic doubt,

Toil — be patient — search the crannies of the mundane edifice;
Take experience for pestle, take for mortar the abyss;

Weld and puddle — I defy you, with all science at your back,
And philosophy to aid, to grow a grain of white wheat black!

At the mystic hour of day-shut, when the pool becomes a glass,
When you walk beneath the holm-oaks, and the shadows o'er you pass,

Ask yourself, my friend, what man is; sound his depths of nothingness;
Ask by how much his deduction leaves infinity the less!

Men are ciphers. Why not view him as he is, the Adamite,
In the sepulchre a mummy, on the earth a parasite?

When Jehovah sets His rainbow in the cloud against the rain,
When He harnesses the whirlwind to the gloom-fraught hurricane,

When from age to age He marshals rosy May, December dun,
When He implicates the cog-wheels of His planets round the sun,

When the zodiac signs go rolling, coupled fast in one intent,
Never crashing on the sleepers of the solid firmament,

When the cable-ropes that draw the stars, the seasons and the weather,
On the windlasses of God come taut and slacken, all together,

To combine their mazy wheelwork in exactest synchrony,
To prevent the tide from mounting past the curbstones on the quay,

To upset the cloud-filled vessel when the time is come for showers,
For the bees upon Hymettus to unfold in June the flowers,

So to order that the comet with a world encounter not,
That the planet should attain, on such a day, its nodal spot,

That whene'er the hour approaches of the evening's duskier light
There should gleam a star suspended in some angle of the night,

That the effluences, the forces, of the ether, of man's heart,
To the universal movement alway should supply their part,

That the system of creation should proceed with due routine,
I can hardly think He studies a philosopher's machine!"

Friend, your irony is bitter, but it glances all awry;
God relies upon the emmet; God has dealings with the fly.

Nothing He has made is idle; with one voice all nature sings;
God is Maker, man inventor; God to man has given wings.

In the cause of truth and virtue man is His auxiliary;
God has taken man for raiment; man is ivy, God the tree.

Since man serves Him, he can aid Him. God it is, who works in men.
In his actions man is conscious of a cause beyond his ken.

Avenues unnumbered beckon to his erring, questing tread;
Problems piled on problems rear their shadowy spans above his head.

On the world, his place of exile, taper-like, he sheds a light,
Shining even to the margin of the shoreless infinite.

It dispels the mists of error; from far off it indicates

The funereal cliffs that border the abyss of human fates.

It reveals the dim-seen portals of the grave; its radiancy
Lightens up the nearmost arches of thy bridge — Eternity!

Underneath the awful vault it gleams, and fear is put to flight;
There is One who holds the lantern; but it lightens thee, O night!

God on all His creatures sets the mighty impress of His will;
Good is what He makes of matter; what through man, is better still.

Terrible was Nature — pitiless — almost devoid of day;
Winnowed through the sieve that man is, all but love is fanned away.

Every sort of law severe appeared to issue from man's fate;
On the stumbling-blocks of evil tripped his feet, that hesitate.

While the earth in wild gyration traverses the vast of space,
There are waves of midnight passing every moment o'er its face.

But through midnight hearths are blazing; we are sure the sun will rise,

And the waning of the shadows may be read in
human eyes.

Ignorance is overworn, the monster half-awakening,
That for zone of thought had blindness, and for
speech a stammering.

Yea, behold, at length recoils the hateful herd of
miseries;
It is Man who sweeps out Chaos, an all-conquering
Hercules.

Heaven is pivoted on the solstice, and mankind upon
free-will;
Justice is the mace he wields; his wrath is negative
of ill.

As he wills it, all obeys him; he is making while he
mars;
His experience draws its fulness from the night-
springs of the stars.

LION'S SLEEP AT NOON

Le lion dort, seul sous sa voûte

Deep in his cave the lion rests;
Enthralled by that prodigious slumber
The sultry mid-day sun invests
With fiery visions without number.

The deserts list awhile with dread,
Then freelier breathe; their tyrant's home.
For the lone tracts quake 'neath his tread
What time this mighty one doth roam.

His hot breath heaves his tawny hide;
In darkness steeped is his red eye;
Deep in the cavern, on his side
He sleeps, outstretched formidably.

Sleep lulls to rest his sateless rage;
He dreams, oblivious of all wrong,
With calm brow that denotes the sage,
With dread fangs that bespeak the strong.

The wells are drunk by noontide's drouth;
Of nought but slumber is he fain.
Like a cavern is his huge mouth,
And like a forest his ruddy mane.

He scans vast craggy heights difform,
Ossa or Pelion scales with might,
Amid those darkling dreams enorme
Wherein but lions take delight.

Upon the bare rock nought is heard
Where lordly feet are wont to stray.
If now one heavy paw were stirred,
What myriad flies would flit away!

DURING AN ILLNESS

Ou dit que je suis fort malade

They tell me I am very ill:
Friend, see my eyes look dead and wan;
The sinister embrace I feel
Of the eternal skeleton.

I rise, but seek again my berth;
For rest, I feel as if I had

Already in my throat the earth,
And scent of grave-yard, foul and bad.

Like sail that to the port would 'scape,
I shiver, and my steps are slow;
And icy cold — a corpse-like shape,
Ghastly, is seen my sheet below.

The power to warm my hands is past;
Like snow my flesh dissolves away;
Upon my brow I feel the blast
Of what dread thing, I cannot say.

Is it the wind from shades obscure —
That wind which pass'd o'er Jesus' soul?
Is't the great Nought of Epicure?
Or is't Spinosa's mighty whole?

The doctor goes — no hope he brings;
Low whisper whosoe'er is near;
All sinks and sways, e'en lifeless things
Assume an attitude of fear.

"He's lost!" I hear them murmur nigh.
My body vacillates; I feel
The helpless, broken armoury
Of mind and senses fail and reel.

That moment — infinite, supreme —
From out the darkness meets my eyes,
A pale, vague sun, as in a dream,
Through the wan heavens seems to rise.

That moment, whether false or true,
Now raises its mysterious front;

Think not I tremble at the view —
To watch such secrets is my wont.

My soul transformed, as sight dilates,
My reason seeks the Godhead veiled;
At last I touch the eternal gates,
And night is by my keys assailed.

To God, the sexton digs our way:
To die is but to learn aright.
"Old labourer!" to Death I say,
"I come to see the hidden sight."

TO A FRIEND

Sur l'effrayante falaise

On the dread cliffs which storms infest,
Walls which the waves dash in between
A gloomy rock, there blooms at rest
A charming meadow, small and green.

Since, friend, you lend me, where I dwell,
Your house, remote from human-kind,
'Twixt the two joys I love so well,
The giant waves, the mighty wind,

All thanks and hail! If fortune frowns
Or smiles, perchance this age of ours
Is like the seaweed 'neath the downs,
Directed by abysmal powers.

Our souls are like the drifted clouds —
Winds, fair or foul, direct their flight;
Hurried in disconnected crowds,
They travel towards the Infinite.

This human turmoil, vast and vain
Of which our reason is the star,
Takes, leaves, deserts — brings back again
Within the horizon, Hope afar!

This sea, tumultuous, fierce, and vast,
Which trembles sore, and wounds the age,
Foams, threatens, and at times will cast
My name amid its cries of rage.

Hatreds about me cling and swarm,
My thought — this noise would vainly fright —
Is like the bird who braves the storm,
Amid the birds that haunt the night.

And while your fields I cultivate,
Just as you wish, with loving care,
The press, with much invective hate,
Gnashes, and tugs me by the hair.

Their diatribes are fierce and sharp:
I'm ass, and rogue, and this and that;
Now I am Pradon for La Harpe,
Then for De Maistre, I seem Marat!

What matters!— hearts are drunk, but man,
Sobered, in times to come will still
Do with my books whate'er they can,
And do with me — whate'er they will.

But I, for joy and wonder see,
In Honfleur meads, your bounty lends,
How burdened by the yellow bee,
The lavender's sweet blossom bends.

L'ANNÉE TERRIBLE

1872

L'ANNÉE TERRIBLE

THE LESSON OF THE PATRIOT DEAD

O caresse sublime

Upon the grave's cold mouth there ever have caresses clung
For those who died ideally good and grand and pure and young;
Under the scorn of all who clamour: "There is nothing just!"
And bow to dread inquisitor and worship lords of dust;
Let sophists give the lie, hearts droop, and courtiers play the worm,
Our martyrs of Democracy the Truth sublime affirm,
And when all seems inert upon this seething, troublous round,
And when the rashest knows not best to flee or stand his ground,
When not a single war-cry from the sombre mass will rush,
When o'er the universe is spread by Doubting utter hush,
Then he who searches well within the walls that close immure
Our teachers, leaders, heroes slain because they lived too pure,
May glue his ear upon the ground where few else came to grieve,

And ask the austere shadows: "Ho! and must one still believe?
Read yet the orders: 'Forward, march!' and 'Charge!'" Then form the lime,
Which burnt the bones but left the soul (Oh! tyrants' useless crime!)
Will rise reply: "Yes!" "yes!" and "yes!" the thousand thousandth time!

THE TERRIBLE YEAR

J'entreprends de conter l'année épouvantable

THAT dreadful year I gird me to relate,
And now bent o'er my desk I hesitate.
Shall I go further on, or shall I stay?
O, France! O, grief! to see a star decay;
I feel the blush of rueful shame arise;
Plagues heaped on plagues, and woes on agonies.
Still must I on for truth and history;
The Age stands at the Bar! The witness — I.

SEDAN

Toulon, c'est peu; Sedan, c'est mieux

TOULON was nought — Sedan is more!— The wretch
O'er whom does logic doom, its trammels stretch,
Slave of his crimes — given up with bandaged eyes,
To the black haps, which played with him at dice,
Dreamer — is whelmed in endless infamy;
The far off formidable gaze on high,
Which ne'er looks off from crime, marked all his way;
God pushed the tyrant — worm and ghost to-day —

Into a gloom that history shudders o'er,
And which for none He opened up before:
There, in the gulf's worst chasm, was he cast,
The Judge all that was prophesied, surpassed.

That man once chanced to dream — I reign, 'tis true!
But men despise me.— They must fear me too;
I, in my turn, will rule the world; I'm quite
My uncle's equal. Terror is my right.
No Austerlitz, yet my Brumaire I have,
For him both Machiavel and Homer slave;
And both kept busy with the task he set.
I want but Machiavel — I've Galifet;
Morny was mine, Rouher, Devienne, remain.
Madrid, Vienna, Lisbon, though unta'en —
Yet Dresden, Munich, Naples I shall take;
St. Andrew's cross from off the ocean rake,
And that old Albion to subjection bring.
A robber's nought, unless a conquering King!
I will be great — a pirate — slaves will own;
Mitred Mastai,— Abdul on his throne,—
The Czar, in bear-skin robe and ermined crown.
Since I with shells Montmartre have battered down.
I can take Prussia — 'Tis as sharp to win
By siege Tortoni, as besiege Berlin,
Who took a bank, may also take Mayence,
Stamboul and Petersburg are mere pretence.
Pius — Emmanuel — both at daggers drawn,
Like two he-goats, fierce fighting on a lawn;
England and Ireland at each other rail,
And Spain on Cuba pours an iron hail.
Joseph and William at each other's hair,
Mock Attila, sham Cæsar, fiercely tear,
And I, once down-at-heel and tippler known,

Shall be the arbiter of every throne —
This glory, I shall reach without a blow,
To be supreme — the mightiest here below —
From false Napoleon seem the true Charlemagne.
'Tis fine!— How do the trick? ask banker Magne
To advance Leboeuf some money, then look out,
(Thus Haroun and his vizier stole about)
When all men sleep and streets deserted lie,
And quickly try the chance, and surely I
May cross the Rhine, who crossed the Rubicon.
Garlands and flowers shall Piétri throw me down,
Magnan is dead, but Frossard I retain;
St. Arnaud's missing, still I have Bazaine;
That Bismarck's but a mountebank, is plain,
I think I play a part as well as he,
Up to this time, chance has complied with me,
Has been my 'complice. Fraud for wife I have;
Coward! I've conquered — Shone, although a knave.
Forward! I've Paris, therefore all mankind.
All things smile on me, why then lag behind?
I want but doublets, and my fortune's made.
Let me go on, since Fortune is a jade.
The world is mine, I chose to govern all,
'Neath juggler's cup I hold the starry ball;
I cheated France — now let us Europe cheat.
My cloak, December! Night — my hiding sheet;
Eagles are gone, I've nought but buzzards now.
'Tis night; I'll use it, and try anyhow.

Full day, on Rome, Vienna, London lies,
And, save that man, all opened wide their eyes;
Berlin watched silent, smiling with delight,
As he was blind he fancied it was night —
All saw the light, he only saw the shade.

Alas, no count of time, place, number made,
Groping unhelped, trusting to destiny;
And having darkness for his sole ally.
This suicide, France's proud armies took,
Which honour never yet nor fame forsook.

And without arms, bread, chiefs, or general,
To the gulf's lowest depth conducted all,
Tranquil the whole into the trap he led.
"Where go you?" cried the tomb —
"Who knows?"— he said.

Agincourt smiles, henceforward Ramilies —
Trafalgar — shall our hours of sorrow please.
Poitiers no grief, Blenheim is no disgrace.
Crecy no field which makes us veil our face.
Black Rosbach almost seems a victory.
This! France, thy hideous spot in history —
Sedan! Death-name, which all has darkened o'er,
Spit forth! so never to pronounce it more.

Fierce was the strife! The carnage large and dire,
Gave to the combatants a glance of fire.
Shrieking the Furies fell, at distance stood,
In a dark cloud all spattered o'er with blood,
Mitrailleuses, mortars, cannons belch their war;
Ravens, those busy workers, come from far.
Banquets are slaughter, massacre a feast;
Rage filled the gloom, and spread from breast to breast;
All Nature part in the fierce battle takes;
From man who maddens, to the tree that shakes;
The fatal field itself seemed frenzied o'er;

One is repulsed, one driven on before.
Now France, now Germany successful cope;
All either had of death the tragic hope,
Or hideous joy of killing — no man shrunk;
All with the acrid scent of blood were drunk;
None yield; each this the fatal hour knows,
That seed an arm of fearful power sows;
Bullets rained down upon the darkened sod;
The wounded groaned, the nearest on them trod;
The hoarse-mouthed cannon on the *melée* blew
A vast thick smoke, which on the breezes flew.
Country, devotion, fame, their thoughts engage,
And duty's call, beneath their desperate rage,
Sudden — in all this mist, 'mid thunder's breath,
In the vast gloom where laughs imagined death;
In clash of epic shocks, and in the hell
Of brass and copper which on iron fell;
The crash, the crush of hurtling shell and bomb,
In rain and rave of that wild hecatomb;
While the harsh clarions sound their dismal cry,
The while our soldiers strive and proudly try
To mate the deeds of their great ancestors,
A shudder through the haggard standards pours,
While waiting the decree of destiny.—
All bleed, fight bravely, strive, or nobly die,—
They heard the monstrous words —"I wish to live!"

The cannons are struck dumb — no longer strive
The blood-drunk hosts — the abysmal word was
said —

And the black eagle waits with claws outspread.

TO LITTLE JEANNE

Vous eûtes donc hier un an

You've lived a year, then, yesterday, sweet child,
Prattling thus happily! So fledglings wild,
New-hatched in warmer nest 'neath sheltering bough,
Chirp merrily to feel their feathers grow.
Your mouth's a rose, Jeanne! In these volumes grand
Whose pictures please you — while I trembling stand
To see their big leaves tattered by your hand —
Are noble lines; but nothing half your worth,
When all your tiny frame rustles with mirth
To welcome me. No work of author wise
Can match the thought half springing to your eyes,
And your dim reveries, unfettered, strange,
Regarding man with all the boundless range
Of angel innocence. Methinks, 'tis clear
That God's not far, Jeanne, when I see you here.

Ah! twelve months old: 'tis quite an age, and brings
Grave moments, though your soul to rapture clings,
You're at that hour of life most like to heaven,
When present joy no cares, no sorrows leaven:
When man no shadow feels: if fond caress
Round parent twines, children the world possess.
Your waking hopes, your dreams of mirth and love
From Charles to Alice, father to mother, rove;
No wider range of view your heart can take
Than what her nursing and his bright smiles make;
They two alone on this your opening hour
Can gleams of tenderness and gladness pour:
They two — none else, Jeanne! Yet 'tis just, and I,
Poor grandsire, dare but to stand humbly by.

You come — I go: though gloom alone my right,
Blest be the destiny which gives you light.

Your fair-haired brother George and you beside
Me play — in watching you is all my pride;
And all I ask — by countless sorrows tried —
The grave; o'er which in shadowy form may show
Your cradles gilded by the morning's glow.

Pure new-born wonderer! your infant life
Strange welcome found, Jeanne, in this time of strife:
Like wild-bee humming through the woods your play,
And baby smiles have dared a world at bay:
Your tiny accents lisp their gentle charms
To mighty Paris clashing mighty arms.
Ah! when I see you, child, and when I hear
You sing, or try, with low voice whispering near,
And touch of fingers soft, my grief to cheer,
I dream this darkness, where the tempests groan,
Trembles, and passes with half-uttered moan.
For though these hundred towers of Paris bend,
Though close as foundering ship her glory's end,
Though rocks the universe, which we defend;
Still to great cannon on our ramparts piled,
God sends His blessing by a little child.

FROM THE INVESTED WALLS OF PARIS

L'occident était blanc

Bright white the west, dense black the eastern sky:
As some invisible arm from heaven let fall,
To serve eve's columns for a canopy,
O'er this horizon a shroud, o'er that a pall.

Night shut in earth, as t'were a prison cold.
Last plaint of bird, last light of leaf, were quenched.
Descending, again I looked toward heaven — behold!
In the low west a bright blade shone, blood-drenched.

That made me muse of some vast duel dread
Fought by a God matched 'gainst some giant-birth:
The awful sword o' the vanquished one had said,
Bloodied with battle, fallen from heaven to earth!

PARIS SLANDERED

Pour la sinistre nuit l'aurore est un scandale

The gloomy night, to hate the dawn is wont:
Th' Athenian seems to Vandal an affront.
Paris, while they attack, they think it best
To make their ambush look like an arrest.
Pedant helps soldier; both together vie
To asperse th' heroic city. Calumny,
Mingled with shells, in the bombardment rains;
The soldier kills, and lies the pleader feigns.
Your morals, your religion they accuse,
And insults heap their murder to excuse.
They slander that they may assassinate.
City and People, as a Senate great,
Fight, draw the sword, O city of the light,
Which fosters art, defends the cotter's right.
Let, O proud home of man's equality,
Howl round thee the foul hordes of bigotry —
Black props of throne and altar — hypocrites!
Who, in all ages, have proscribed the lights;
Who guard all Gods against th' inquiring mind;

Who screech in every history we find —
At Thebes, Mycenæ, Delphi, Memphis, Rome —
Like bark of unclean dogs from distance come.

TO THE BISHOP WHO CALLED ME AN ATHEIST

Athée? entendons-nous, prêtre, une fois pour toutes

Me, reverend sir, "an Atheist" you call?
Let's understand each other, once for all.
To play the spy on me, to trap my soul,
To act eaves-dropper, look through the keyhole
To the inside of my spirit, search how deep
My doubts may reach, even into hell to peep
And read the records of its dark police
Across that sea of sighs that never cease,
To see what I believe, and what deny —
Spare yourself all these needless pains, say I.
My faith is simple; here I write my creed.
I love plain words, such as who runs may read.

If we are speaking of an aged man
White-bearded, seated on a stage divan
'Twixt an archangel and a seer; a kind
Of Emperor or Pope; a cloud behind,
A bird above his head; his offspring pale
Held in his arms, pierced through with many a nail;
A jealous God, that is both one and three;
A vengeful, with an ear for psalmody;
Punishing children for their father's crime,
Hallowing royal brigands in their slime,
Stopping the sun short, every evening,
At risk of snapping off the great main-spring;
God, ignorant of science physical,

Man's counterpart in large; the same in small;
Angry at times, and somewhat given to pout,
Like Pére Duchêne with his big sabre out;
Tardy in pardon, quick at condemnation,
Checking his mother's passes to salvation;
A God who, seated in his azure sky,
Makes it his business with our faults to vie,
His sport to keep a pack of miseries
As squires keep hounds; who makes disturbances;
Sets Nimrod, Cyrus loose, and gets us bitten
By Attila, and by Cambyses eaten,
I am, sir priest, whoe'er may think it odd,
An Atheist, to this good-old-fashioned God.

If, on the other hand, we have to do
With the all-essential Being above us, who
In all we are concentrates all we dream;
In whom the dissonances of nature seem
Accorded, and the universal span
Claims personality, no less than man;
That Being, whose soul I feel within my own;
Who ever pleads with me, in still small tone,
For truth against illusion, while around
The senses boil, and half my powers are drowned;
If with that witness who within has wrought
Now pain, now pleasure at a passing thought,
So that, according as I sink or soar,
The brute, or spirit, prevails in me the more;
If with that everlasting marvel, rife
With something more than we possess of life,
Wherewith our soul becomes intoxicate
As often as it comes, soaring elate,
As Jesus and as Socrates did come,
For truth, right, virtue, straight to martyrdom;
Oft as high duty impels it down the steep,

Oft as it skims a halcyon o'er the deep,
Oft as with loftier aim it penetrates
Athwart the ugly shadow of its hates,
And on the farther frontier of the gloom
Seeks for the dawn; O priest, if we assume
To speak of that First Essence, whom a creed
Neither unmakes nor makes; whom we concede
Wise, and suppose benignant; without face,
Without a body, or son; having more grace
Of fatherhood the while, and more of love,
Than summer has of sunlight from above;
If of that vast unknown, whom Holy Writ
Names not, explains not, makes not known one whit;
Of whom no scribes, no commentators speak,
Most High that looms, dim as a mountain-peak,
O'er cradled infant and enshrouded dead;
Not eatable in any unleavened bread;
If of that dizzy summit of all natures
Who speaks in tongues of elemental creatures,
(Not priests, or Bibles;) Him, who reads the abyss,
To whom the heaven of heavens a temple is;
Not sensual; not ceremonial;
The law, the life, the very soul of all;
Invisible, because He is immense;
Intangible, save that beyond our sense,
Past all those forms, which any breath can melt,
In nothing grasped, He is in all things felt;
If of the all-transcending quietude,
Solstice of reason, justice, right, and good,
Who, stable make-weight of infinity,
That is, that was, that evermore shall be,
Sets bounds to suns, gives patience in distress,
Without us light, within us consciousness;
Who hath shone ever in heaven, and under earth;
And is the Birth; and is the Second Birth;

If of the eternal, single, vast First Cause,
Whose being is His thought; whose thought, the laws
Whence all things have their being; whom I call
God, merely as the greatest name of all:
Then, we change sides. Then turn our spirits home;
Thine to the night, the mire, the ghastly gloom
Where only mockings and negations live;
Mine to the light, the august affirmative,
Hymn, ecstasy of my rapt soul! Then, Priest,
I am believer, and thou Atheist.

TO A SICK CHILD DURING THE SIEGE

Si vous continuez d'être ainsi toute pâle

If you continue thus so wan and white;
If I, one day, behold
You pass from out our dull air to the light,
You, infant — I, so old:
If I the thread of our two lives must see
Thus blent to human view,
I who would fain know death was near to me,
And far away for you;
If your small hands remain such fragile things;
If, in your cradle stirred,
You have the mien of waiting there for wings,
Like to some new-fledged bird;
Not rooted to our earth you seem to be.
If still, beneath the skies,
You turn, O Jeanne, on our mystery
Soft, discontented eyes!
If I behold you, gay and strong no more;
If you mope sadly thus;
If you behind you have not shut the door,
Through which you came to us;

If you no more like some fair dame I see
Laugh, walk, be well and gay;
If like a little soul you seem to me
That fain would fly away —
I'll deem that to this world, where oft are blent
The pall and swaddling-band,
You came but to depart — an angel sent
To bear me from the land.

THE FORTS OF PARIS

Ils sont les chiens de garde énormes de Paris

They are the watch-dogs, terrible superb,
Enormous, faithfully that Paris guard.
As each moment we could be surprised,
As a wild horde is there, as ambush vile
Creeps sometimes even to the city walls,
Nineteen in number, scattered on the mounts
They watch,— unquiet, menacing, sublime,
Over dark spaces limitless, at eve,
And as the night advances, warn, inform,
And one another aid, far stretching out
Their necks of bronze around the walls immense.
They rest awake, while peacefully we sleep,
And in their hoarse lungs latent thunders growl
Low premonitions. Sometimes from the hills,
Sharply and suddenly bestrewed with stars,
A lightning darts athwart the sombre night
Over the valleys; then the heavy veil
Of twilight thick, or utter darkness, falls
Upon us, masking in its silence deep
A treacherous snare, and in its peace, a camp;
Like a huge crawling serpent round us winds
The enemy, and enlaces us in coils

Inveterate, interminable, but in vain.
At a respectful distance keep the forts
A multitude, a populace of monstrous guns,
That, in the far horizon, wolf-like prowl.
Bivouac, and tomb, and prison, Paris now is all.
Upright and straight before the universe
That has become a solitude, she stands
A sentinel, and surprised with weariness
From over-watching, slumbers; all is still.
Men, women, children, sobs passionate, bursts
Of triumphant laughter, cars, footsteps, quays,
Squares, crossways, and the river's sandy banks,
The thousand roofs whence issue murmurs low,
The murmurs of our dreams, the hope that says
I trust and I believe, the hunger, that I die,
The dark despair that knows not what it says,
All, all keep silence. O thou mighty crowd!
O noises indistinct and vague! O sleep,
Of all a word! And O great glorious dreams,
Unfathomable, that ever one and all
Mock our frail wisdom, now are ye submerged
In one vast ocean of oblivion deep.
But they are there, formidable and grand,
Eternally on watch.

On a sudden spring
The people, startled, breathless, doleful, awed,
And bend to listen. What is it they hear?
A subterraneous roar, a voice profound
As from a mountain's bowels. All the town
Listens intent, and all the country round
Awakes. And hark! to the first rumbling sound
Succeeds a second, hollow, sullen, fierce,
And in the darkness other noises crash,
And echo follows echo flying far!

A hundred voices terrible through night,
Rolling, reverberating, and dying off!
It is the forts. It is that they have seen
In depths profound of spaces vast and dim,
The sinister cannon-waggons darkly grouped;
It is, that they the outlines have surprised
Of cannons ranged; it is that in some wood
From whence the owl has fled on hurried wings,
Beside a field, they faintly have descried
The black swarm of battalions on the march,
With bayonet gleams, like points of silver sharp
Commingled; it is that in thickets dense
They have found out the flash of traitorous eyes
Or tread of stealthy steps.

How grand they are,
These great watch-dogs, that in the darkness bay!

TOYS AND TRAGEDY

Enfants, on vous dira plus tard

In later years, they'll tell you grandpapa
Adored his little darlings; for them did
His utmost just to pleasure them and mar
No moments with a frown or growl amid
Their rosy rompings; that he loved them so
(Though men have called him bitter, cold, and stern,)
That in the famous winter when the snow
Covered poor Paris, he went, old and worn,
To buy them dolls, despite the falling shells,
At which laughed Punch, and they, and shook his bells.

A LETTER BY BALLOON POST

Paris terrible et gai combat. Bonjour, madame

Paris is warring, formidably gay.
Good-morning, Madam! How are you to-day?
We are one people, here, one world, one soul;
None for himself; each careful for the whole.
We have no sun, no succour — and no fear.
All will go well, if none are napping here.
Schmitz writes despatches on the situation,
As flat as Æschylus in Bohn's translation.
I purchased four fresh eggs for shillings ten,
Not for myself, but for my grandchildren.
Paris is pent so closely in the net,
So fast beleaguered, and so hard beset,
Our stomachs are turned Noah's arks; we eat
Horse-meat and bear-meat, rats' meat, asses' meat.
No trees are left; they are felled, and sawn to logs;
Gone are the Champs Elysées — to the dogs.
The panes are frosted, and we have no fire
To get the laundry any drier,
And so — good-bye clean shirts! The evening stirs
A vast low buzzing at the street-corners
Of testy voices, as the crowd turns out,
With now and then a song, or warlike shout.
All down the river, hesitating, flows
The broken ice in archipelagoes,
And gunboats pass, and leave a wake behind.
We live on air — on food of any kind —
And are content. Upon our napless board,
Where hunger waits, a chance potato stored
Is hailed a queen, and onions are divine,
As once they were in Egypt — when we dine.
Numbed are our fingers; fuel, too, we lack.

Our coal is failing, but our bread is black.
There is no gas, so Paris goes to sleep
Under one vast extinguisher. We creep,
From six o'clock, in darkness. The grenades
Make a tremendous pother o'er our heads;
Out of a handsome fragment I have made
This inkstand. Paris, bludgeoned and betrayed,
Utters no plaint. The burghers man the wall;
These fathers, husbands, brothers of us all
Watch under fire, in martial cap and hood,
And sleep upon a mattress made of wood.
Moltke bombards us, Bismarck slanders us.
So be it. Paris is heroic, thus;
And Paris is — a woman; she can be
Both fair and valorous; her eyes range free,
Smiling and thoughtful, under the broad noon,
From homing pigeon to escaped balloon.
Her awfulness casts off its frivolous slough;
And, happy to discern no wavering now,
I cry to all "Love! Strive! Forget, and know
No name save France, no foeman but the foe!"
The women — oh be proud of them to-day!
They are sublime, when everything gives way.
The glory of the women of old Rome
Lay in their homely homes, their love of home,
Their hands made hard with spinning the coarse
wool,
Their slumbers brief, their carriage worshipful,
The camp of Hannibal before their gates,
And the Port-Colline guarded by their mates.
Those days return. The cat-like giantess,
Prussia, is gripping Paris. Leopardess,
She claws the great — the palpitating heart
Of the whole world, already dead, in part.
In Paris, in this cruel strait, the wench

Has become Roman, while the man is French.
Their attitude would please old Juvenal;
Women of Paris, they accept it all,
The nightly watching at the flesher's shop,
The snow, the rainfall pouring, drop by drop,
As from an upturned vessel overhead;
Their hearths extinct, their feet with frost-bite dead,
The famine and the terror and the fight,
Country and duty, nothing else, in sight.

Our citadels in the bombardment hum;
At dawn the trumpet answers to the drum;
The assembly wakes, with the fresh breath of morn,
The city, gleaming through the shade forlorn;
A quavering sennet sounds from street to street;
We dream of gaining some success; we greet
Brothers in arms; we set our faces fast;
We bare our foreheads to the thunder-blast.
Paris, the city of renown and sorrow,
Sees — and salutes — the terrors of the morrow.
Is cold, is hunger to be looked for — say?
Well, it is night. What follows night? The day.
We suffer, true; but with a constant mood.
Prussia's our prison, Paris our Latude.
Courage! our ancient fires again shall burn;
Stay but a month, the tide of war will turn;
Then, madam, we intend to go and rest
In the green fields, and have you for a guest;
And we shall call on you in March, all three,
If we are not first killed, in February.

BRUTE WAR

Ouvrière sans yeux, Pénélope imbécile

Toiler sans eyes, dull-brained Penelope,
Cradler of chaos, powerless to create,
War, whom the clash of iron fires to glee,
The furious blast of clarions makes elate,—
Quaffer of blood, foul hag that to thy feast
Lur'st men and madden'st them with vile delight,—
Cloud, swollen with thunder North, South, West and East,
Fulfilled with rays darker than darkest night,—
Vast Madness, that for swords keen lightnings wieldest,
What is thy use, dire birth of hellish race,
If while thou ruinest sin, crime thou upbuildest,
Setting the monster i' the beast's pride of place;
If with thine awful darkness thou dost smother
One Emperor, but to yield earth thence another?

THE CARRIER PIGEON

Oh! qu'est-ce que c'est donc que l'Inconnu

Who then — oh, who, is like our God so great,
Who makes the seed expand beneath the mountain's weight;
Who for a swallow's nest leaves one old castle wall,
Who lets for famished bettles savoury apples fall,
Who bids a pigmy win where Titans fail, in yoke,
And, in what we deem fruitless roar and smoke,
Makes Etna, Chimborazo, still His praises sing,
And saves a city by a word lapped 'neath a pigeon's wing!

THE SORTIE

L'aube froide blêmit

The chill dawn glimmered, wan for night's defeat.
A troop defiled in order through the street;
I followed, by that rumour vast drawn on
Of men's feet trampling in strong unison.
Citizens were they marching for the fight;
Pure Warriors! In the ranks, less as to height,
But by the heart compeer, the child with pride
Held by the hand his father, by whose side,
Bearing her husband's rifle, marched the wife.
Still, as of yore, our Gallic girls in strife
Are proud their warriors' glittering arms to bear,
If one beard Cæsar, or brave Attila.
What next? The child laughs; those dark eyes of yours,
Mother, are dry. Paris defeat endures,
But all her children are on this agreed,
That, save by shame, no people's shamed indeed,
That their dead sires will blush not, come what may,
So Paris die that France may live for aye.
Honour we keep; for the rest we care not, we —
So forward! On pale brows inscribed we see,
'Bove eyes aflame, Faith, Courage, and Starvation.
Onward these warriors of a glorious nation
March, 'neath her banner, torn, but undefiled:
With the battalion mingle wife and child,
To leave it only at the city-gates.
These men devoted, and their warrior-mates
Sing. Paris bleeds for the whole human race.
An ambulance passes; of all tyrants base
One muses, whose least whim makes rivers red
Flow from out veins of victor and vanquishèd.

The hour draws nigh; to the sortie drums beat,
While troops high-hearted pour from street on street;
All hasten; to the leaguer woe this morn!
Ambushes! — but all snares one holds in scorn,
Knowing the valiant, vanquished thus, acclaimed
Glorious of all men, while the victor's shamed.
At th' walls they arrive; concentrate; suddenly
Adrift on the wind a wreath of smoke we see;
Halt! 'Tis the signal-gun! Another! lo,
Through massed battalions runs a mighty throe!
The moment's come; the gates are opened wide;
Trumpets, speak loud! yon low green plains divide
From us the woods where lurks the foe unseen;
The horizon stretches motionless, serene,
Slumberous, insidious, with dire flames replete.
Listen, low words —"Adieu! — my rifle, sweet!"

. . .

And wives, heart-broken, brow where nought's amiss,
Give up the rifles, sacred with Love's kiss.

IN THE CIRCUS

Le lion du midi voit venir l'ours polaire

The southern Lion saw the Polar Bear
Rush at him, gnash, and, full of fiery glare
Attack him, growling worse than Nubian wind.
The Lion said —"You idiot, never mind;
We're in the circus, and you fight with me —
What for? That low-browed fellow do you see?
That's Nero — Roman Emperor, so it haps; —
You fight for him; bleed, and he laughs and claps.
Brother, in the wide world we ne'er were foes,
And heaven alike o'er each its mantle throws.
You see above no fewer stars than I.

With us, what wants that master set on high?
He's pleased! but we? — we by his order fight:
His business is to laugh, and ours to bite.
He makes us kill each other; while, good sooth,
Brother, my claw gives answer to your tooth,
He's there upon his throne, with gaze intent,
Our pangs his sport! Our spheres are different.
Brother, when we our life-blood shed in streams,
To him, in purple clad, it harmless seems.
Come, dolt, set on! my claws prepared you see:
But still I think and say, we fools shall be
In internecine strife to spend our power,
And wiser 'twere the Emperor to devour!

CAPITULATION

Ainsi les nations les plus grandes chavirent!

Thus greatest nations to their fall descend —
'Tis in miscarriage all their labours end;
Was it for this, th' indignant people say,
We did all night on the high bastions stay?
Were we for this unconquered, lofty, stark,
And of the Prussian missiles stood the mark?
Was it for this, we heroes, martyrs were,
And more and fiercer war than Tyre bare;
Than Corinth or Byzantium more endured,
For this, for five long months, have been immured
By those black furtive Teutons, in whose eyes
The gloomy stupor of weird forests lies!
For this dug mines, and borne the strife immense,
Broke bridges, famine braved, and pestilence;
Did trenches make, fix piles, and towers build!
O France! and with the seed of slaughter filled

The grave — of battles the black granary!
For this did storm and shot each day defy!

High Heavens! after such tests, such noble deeds
By Paris wrought which uncomplaining bleeds,—
After vast hopes, and expectations high
Of the proud town panting for victory:
Which dashing 'gainst the cannon iron knit,
Appeared its walls the champ, as horse its bit,—
Where valour greater grew, new woes to meet,
Where children shelled while running in the street,
Picked up the shells, and cannon balls in sport,—
When not one single citizen fell short; —
Three hundred thousand for the battle steeled —
— Their officers th' unconquered city yield!
With your devotion, fury, pride of heart,
And courage,— they have played the coward's part,
People! — And history shall loathe and blame
Such glory, tarnished by so deep a shame.

BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY

Si nous terminons cette guerre

If this foul war we ended see,
And grant all Prussia longs to get,
Then, like a glass our France would be,
Upon a pothouse table set: —

You empty it, and then you break!
Our haughty country is no more.
O grief, that shame should overtake
Where only honour lived of yore!

Black morrow, with dismay for text;
All dregs we drink — on ashes feed;
The eagles gone; there follow next
The vultures, these do hawks succeed.

Two provinces now torn away —
Metz poisoned, Strasburg crucified;
Sedan, deserter in the fray,
A brand on France that will abide.

There lives in souls degenerate
Base love of loathly happiness —
Pride cast away; they cultivate
The growth, the increase of disgrace.

Our ancient splendour stained, belied,
Our mighty wars dishonoured now,
The country mazed and stupefied,
Unused to live with lowered brow.

The foeman in our citadels;
Attila's shadow o'er us thrown;
The swallow to its fellow tells,
This is not France that we have known.

Her mouth full of the foul Bazaine!
Renown, with slow and broken wing,
Does with unwholesome slaver stain
The trump that erst did nobly ring.

Brethren alone they dare to fight.
Bayard! thy name no longer lives;
They murder now, to hide from sight
That lately they were fugitives.

Black night mounts up on every brow,
And not a soul dares soar on high;
Heaven does itself our shame avow,
Since we refuse to seek the sky.

Chill hearts are here, and darkness deep —
People from people separate
All wide apart and hostile keep,
And love is dead, and turned to hate.

Prussia and France are foemen sworn;
That host is all with hatred fired;
Our dark eclipse their joyful morn —
Our tomb, by all of them desired.

Shipwreck! To mighty deeds good bye!
Deceived, deceiving all is made;
"The cowards!" to our flag they cry —
And to our cannon, "They're afraid."

Our pride, our hopes, departed all,
A shroud on history fallen is —
O God! permit not France to fall
In gulf of such a peace as this.

TO THOSE WHO TALK ABOUT FRATERNITY

Quand nous serons vainqueurs

When we are conquerors we'll see — till then
The feeling fitting grief is fierce disdain:
Best suits defeat the gloomy downcast eye,
Free, we spread light; enslaved, we prophesy.
We're burked, and 'twixt us twain no love can dwell!
The ruin of the invader I foretell.

'Tis proper pride, in those who feel the chain,
Hatred alone for shelter to retain;
To love the Germans, that will come, what time
Our victory makes to love no longer crime.
Peace to proclaim is always false and vain
In those who, vanquished, have not vengeance ta'en.
Let's wait the time when we the road command;
When 'neath our feet — then hold them out the hand.
I can but bleed so long as France doth weep;
For fitter time all talk of concord keep;
Fraternity stammered out, and meant but half,
But makes the foe his shoulders shrug and laugh;
The offer to be friends, and rancour stay,
To-morrow may be fine, but base to-day.

THE STRUGGLE

Hélas! c'est l'ignorance en colère

'Tis angry ignorance, to pity those
Who still their eyes to truth's bright radiance close;
And, friend, why care? Honour with us we see.
Pity those rulers, who on bended knee
Sign the vile peace which France doth gripe and rend;
Let their insane ingratitude descend,
In history with your contempt and mine.
Jesus himself their malice would malign;
Paul a fierce democrat they would have named;
And Socrates as a mere quack defamed.
They're made so their blear eyes the daylight fear —
The fault not theirs, at Naples, Rome, or here,
Throughout —'tis natural these souls perverse
As soldiers envy you — as priests should curse;

The first being beaten — and unmasked the last.
The ice which by our quays this winter passed
Pell mell, and all things cold and gloomy made,
Yet drifting quickly melted in the shade,
Was not more hateful, nor more vain than this.
You who of old (as heaven-sent warriors may)
Freed cities without armies and alone,
Let their vile clamours at your head be thrown.
What matters it! — clasp we our hands anew,
I, the old Frenchman — the old Roman you.
Let us go hence this place, unmeet and vain,
And let us each our lofty cliffs regain,
Where, if we're hissed — at least 'tis by the sea:
Come, let the lightning our insulter be —
Fury not base — grief worthy of the brave —
True gulfs — and quit their slaver for the wave.

MOURNING

Charle! Charle! ô mon fils!

CHARLES, Charles, my son! hast thou, then, quitted
me?
Must all fade, nought endure?
Hast vanished in that radiance, clear for thee
But still for us obscure?

My sunset lingers, boy, thy morn declines!
Sweet mutual love we've known;
For man, alas! plans, dreams, and smiling twines
With others' souls his own.

He cries, "This has no end!" pursues his way.
He soon is downward bound:
He lives, he suffers; in his grasp one day,
Mere dust and ashes found.

I've wandered twenty years, in distant lands,
With sore heart forced to stay:
Why fell the blow Fate only understands!
God took my home away.

To-day one daughter and one son remain
Of all my goodly show:
Well-nigh in solitude my dark hours wane;
God takes my children now.

Linger, ye two still left me! though decays
Our nest, our hearts remain;
In gloom of death your mother silent prays,
I in this life of pain.

Martyr of Sion! holding Thee in sight,
I'll drain this cup of gall,
And scale with step resolved that dangerous height,
Which rather seems a fall.

Truth is sufficient guide; no more man needs
Than end so nobly shown.
Mourning, but brave, I march; where duty leads,
I seek the vast unknown.

WHAT DICTATES THE BOOK

Temps affreux! ma pensée est

My soul seems, in this frightful season of time
Thronged by the monstrous justling the sublime,
A plain given up to every wandering tread,
Ceaselessly trampled by deeds grand or dread.
This book of mine's dictated day by day
By the hour that roars, then moans its life away.

The weeks of the *Awful Year* are hydras dire,
Hell-born of fire to be consumed by fire;
Onward with blazing eyes they all must roll,
Leaving their burning grip upon my soul;
Upon my verse, wan, wild for pity or wrath,
Th' imprint one sees upon a serpent's path.
Should one regard my spirit now, he'd see
Dark signs thereon engraven countlessly
Of all these days of horror, doubt, defiance,
As 'twere a desert trampled o'er by lions.

STRIKE!

Qui que vous soyez, vous que je sers et que j'aime

Whoe'er you are who suffer, who endure,
You whom I love, whom I have sought to cure,
Have pitied, warned, defended many a time —
You who struck root in evil, sown by crime,
Brothers of mine, down-trodden, outcast, lost —
Spurn you the man who profits at your cost!
Follow the soaring, not the halting sprite;
Mount upwards, to the future, to the light!
No longer let yourselves be swayed; resist;
Ay, though he call him by what name he lists,
Resist the man, whoever he may be,
Who counsels you against humanity.
Strike! against famine, against miseries;
Oh that you knew how near your triumph is!

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Tu viens d'incendier la Bibliothèque? — Oui

You set the Library on fire? "Oh yes,
I lit the match." Unheard-of wickedness!

Treason against yourself! You wretched scamp,
Would you put out your own soul's guiding-lamp?
What you are burning in your senseless rage
Is your own wealth, your dower, your heritage.

Books ever were the tyrant's enemy;
Ever took sides with and stood up for thee.
What is a Library? An act of faith,
Whereby the spirit of generations saith
How through a night yet dark we hope for day.
Upon these masterpieces — this array
Of truths revered, charged with Heaven's lightning-
blast,
This tomb, become the storehouse of times past,
On ages vanished, on primæval man,
On history — the story that began
Long since, never to end — the picture-book
Whereon the lisping future is to look,
Upon the poets — on the mine where lie
Whole Bibles — on the sacred heap, breast-high,
Where Job, where Æschylus and Homer stand,
Thou hurl'st, O villain, an enkindled brand!
All human reason, Kant, Voltaire, Molière,
In a smoke-wreath thou scatterest on the air!
Dost thou forget, books are what ransom thee?
There stands the Book, high on the acclivity,
And shines; in that it shines, and sheds its light,
It destroys war, the scaffold, famine, blight!
It speaks; the slave, the pariah is no more!
Open a book — Milton's or Plato's lore,
Dante or Shakespeare, Corneille, Beccarie,
Their mighty inspiration wakes in thee.
Thou, as thou readest, art amazed to find
In thine own self a man, with the same mind
That is in them; made thoughtful, mild and grave,

Thou seest in the light these great ones gave
Thy spirit illumined, as the cloister-gloom
Fades in the dawn; their lofty grandeurs loom
In thine own consciousness; their fiery dart,
As it is planted deeper in thy heart,
Makes thee more life-full — puts thy passions by;
Questioned, thy soul springs up to make reply;
Good impulses within thee stir and grow
To better; thou feel'st melt, like melting snow,
Thy pride, thy prejudices, all ill things,
Frenzies and errors, emperors and kings.
For knowledge, first, men's consciences absorb,
And freedom, second. Look, the sun's whole orb
Is thine, and thou extinguishest the sun!
That thou art yearning for, by books is won.
All consciousness is as a Gordian knot;
Then comes the Book, and enters deep in thought,
Loosening the bonds of truth, by error tied;
It is man's leech, his guardian and his guide;
His hate it heals, his madness takes away.

See what you wreck, by your own act, to-day;
Knowledge, truth, virtue, duty, law, reform,
Reason dispelling fury, calm in storm.
Books are the wealth that is your own indeed.
And you destroy all this?

"But I can't read."

ON A BARRICADE

Sur une barricade, au milieu des pavés

Upon a barricade thrown 'cross the street,
Where patriot's blood with felon's stains one's feet,

Ta'en with grown men, a lad aged twelve, or less!
"Were you among them — you?" He answered:
"Yes."
"Good," said the officer, "when comes your turn,
You'll be shot too."— The lad sees lightnings burn,—
Stretched 'neath the wall his comrades one by one:
Then says to the officer, "First let me run
And take this watch home to my mother, sir?"
"You want to escape?"—"No, I'll come back."—
"What fear
These brats have! Where do you live?"—"By the well, below:
I'll return quickly if you let me go."
"Be off, young scamp!" Off went the boy.
"Good joke!"
And here from all a hearty laugh outbroke,
And with this laugh the dying mixed their moan.
But the laugh suddenly ceased, when, paler grown,
'Midst them the lad appeared, and breathlessly
Stood upright 'gainst the wall with: "Here am I."
Dull death was shamed; the officer said, "Be free!"

Child, I know not, in all this agony,
Where good and ill as with one blast of hell
Are blent, *thy* part, but this I know right well,
That thy young soul's a hero-soul sublime.
Gentle and brave, thou trod'st, despite all crime,
Two steps,— one toward thy mother, one toward death.
For the child's deeds the grown man answereth;
No fault was thine to march where others led.
But glorious aye that child who chose instead
Of flight that lured to life, love, freedom, May,
The sombre wall 'neath which slain comrades lay!
Glory on thy young brow imprints her kiss.

In Hellas old, sweetheart, thou hadst, I wis,
After some deathless fight to win or save,
Been hailed by comrades bravest of the brave; —
Hadst smiling in the holiest ranks been found,
Haply by Æschylean verse bright-crowned!
On brazen disks thy name had been engraven; —
One of those godlike youths who, 'neath blue heaven,
Passing some well whereo'er the willow droops,
What time some virgin 'neath her pitcher stoops,
Brimmed for her herds athirst, brings to her eyes
A long, long look of awed yet sweet surmise.

PAST PARTICIPLE OF THE VERB TROP-CHOIR

Participe passé du verbe Tropchoir

Past participle of Tropchoir — man fraught
With virtues numberless — whose sum is nought;
Brave, pious soldier, useless for attack,
Not a bad cannon — but too apt to back;
Christian, upright, who two-fold merit has,
Of serving both his country — and the mass.
I do you justice; why, then, at me carp?
You make on me, in style oblique and sharp,
Assaults, which, if on Prussia made, had told
During the Prussian siege, and Russian cold.
Being an old man, I bore not arms.— Confest!
Glad to be shut in Paris with the rest;
And sometimes, while did shot and bullets fall,
Would in my turn mount guard upon the wall:
Cried "Here!"— though old and by decree of Fate
Useless — yet I not capitulate!
In your hands laurels turned to nettles be,
You make your only sorties against me.

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Of them in that bad siege we thought you slack.
Well, we were wrong — for me you kept them back.
You, who to cross the Maine were never known,
Why fly at me — since I left you alone?
Why should my blue cloth coat your eyes displease,
Or my kepi disturb your chaplet's ease?

Cold, famine, five long months we underwent,
And dread of worse.— And are you not content?
Brave, faithful, we ne'er harassed you at all.
Say, if you please, you're a great general;
But to dash through the gulf, through foes to break,
To sound the charge, thro' fire your hose to take,
Barra, the subaltern, I covet more.

See Garibaldi, from Caprera's shore,
Kleber at Cairo, or on Venice walls
Manin.— Be calm! Great Paris dies and falls
Because you lacked not heart but faith.— Alas!
On you will history this sentence pass:
France, thanks to him, fought with but half her power,
In those great days, in strife's decisive hour;
The land which wounds, death, foes could ne'er subdue,
Marched with Gambetta, halted with Trochu.

THE WATERLOO LION

Un jour moi qui ne crains l'approche d'aucun spectre

I WENT one day to Waterloo, to see
The Lion. Spectres do not frighten me.
I traversed the ravines, reached the dark field;
It was the hour when morning is revealed

Chasing the twilight; once arrived, I went
Straight to the gloomy hillock monument;
I mounted it in an indignant mood;
For glory of the sword, slaughter and blood,
Causes me horror. O'er the plain, now mute,
The monster towered; from underneath its foot
I gazed upon the image reared on high;
Its immobility defiled the sky;

This creature, banished to the upper air,
In sullen isolation seemed to bear
Untiring witness, with ferocious joy,
To memories of insult and annoy.
I climbed; the shadows deepened overhead;
As I approached the narrow crest, I said
"He sleeps, until the world beside is full
Of slumber; but he is implacable;
At intervals, as the night minutes pass,
A hollow roar will issue from the brass,
And peasants, hurrying from the haunted field,
Will doubt if thunder, or the image, pealed."

Creeping by inches, I came close to it.
I looked for thunder, and I heard — a twit.
From the vast gullet came a modest note;
Deep in the shapeless hollow of its throat
A robin redbreast had contrived its nest.
The sweet-winged flutterer, by the spring-tide blest,
Spurning the terrors of the uplifted jaw,
Had hatched its brood within the monstrous maw.
The tragic mount, upright and cliff-like, stood
Upon the plain, once red with all that blood;
And as I listened, pale, with open ear,
I felt the presence of a spirit near,
Singing of hope, even in hope's surcease,
And in the very gorge of war, of peace.

TO HIS ORPHAN GRANDCHILDREN

O Charles, je te sens près de moi

I FEEL thy presence, Charles. Sweet martyr! down
In earth, where men decay,
I searched, and see from cracks which rend thy tomb,
Burst out pale morning's ray.

Close linked are bier and cradle: here the dead,
To charm us, live again:
Kneeling, I mourn, when on my threshold sounds
Two little children's strain.

George, Jeanne, sing on! George, Jeanne, unconscious play!
Your father's form recall,
Now darkened by his sombre shade, now gilt
By beams that wandering fall.

Oh, knowledge! what thy use? did we not know
Death holds no more the dead;
But Heaven, where, hand in hand, angel and star
Smile at the grave we dread?

A Heaven, which childhood represents on earth.
Orphans, may God be nigh!
That God, who can your bright steps turn aside
From darkness, where I sigh.

All joy be yours, though sorrow bows me down!
To each his fitting wage:
Children, I've passed life's span, and men are plagued
By shadows at that stage.

Hath any done — nay, only half performed —
The good he might for others?
Hath any conquered hatred, or had strength
To treat his foes like brothers?

E'en he, who's tried his best, hath evil wrought:
Pain springs from happiness:
My heart has triumphed in defeat, my pulse
Ne'er quickened at success.

I seemed the greater when I felt the blow:
The prick gives sense of gain;
Since to make others bleed my courage fails,
I'd rather bear the pain.

To grow is sad, since evils grow no less;
Great height is mark for all:
The more I have of branches, more of clustering boughs,
The ghastlier shadows fall.

Thence comes my sadness, though I grant your charms:
Ye are the outbursting
Of the soul in bloom, steeped in the draughts
Of nature's boundless spring.

George is the sapling, set in mournful soil;
Jeanne's folding petals shroud
A mind which trembles at our uproar, yet
Half longs to speak aloud.

Give, then, my children — lowly, blushing plants,
Whom sorrow waits to seize —
Free course to instincts, whispering 'mid the flowers,
Like hum of murmuring bees.

Some day you'll find that chaos comes, alas!
That angry lightning's hurled,
When any cheer the People, Atlas huge,
Grim bearer of the world!

You'll see that, since our fate is ruled by chance,
Each man, unknowing, great,
Should frame life so, that at some future hour
Fact and his dreamings meet.

I, too, when death is past, one day shall grasp
That end I know not now;
And over you will bend me down, all filled
With dawn's mysterious glow.

I'll learn what means this exile, what this shroud
Enveloping your prime;
And why the truth and sweetness of one man
Seem to all others crime.

I'll hear — though midst these dismal boughs you sang —
How came it, that for me,
Who every pity feel for every woe,
So vast a gloom could be.

I'll know why night relentless holds me, why
So great a pile of doom:
Why endless frost enfolds me, and methinks
My nightly bed's a tomb:

Why all these battles, all these tears, regrets,
And sorrows were my share;
And why God's will of me a cypress made,
When roses bright ye were.

L'ART D'ÊTRE GRAND-PÈRE

1872

L'ART D'ÊTRE GRAND-PÈRE

THE CONTENTED EXILE

I.

Solitude! silence! oh! le désert me tente

The solitude and silence tempt me forth
To desert places. There the soul is calm
And sternly satisfied; one knows not there
What is that shadow which he shall illume.
I go into the forests seeking there
Vague awe; the tangled thickness of the boughs
Informs me with a joy and terror dim;
And there I find oblivion akin
To that within the silence of the tomb.
But I am not extinguished; one can be
A torch in darkness, and beneath the sky,
Beneath the sacred crypt, alone, remain
To shiver in the deep and windy breath
Of the empyrean. Nought is lost to man
For having sounded duty's depths obscure.
Who looks from high sees well: who looks from far
Sees rightly. Conscience knows a sacred faith
Is possible for her, and goes to high
And lonely places, there to shine and grow,
Remote from the forgetful, callous world.
And therefore I too go forth to the waste,
But do not quit the world which I forsake.

Because a dreamer comes, in forests' depths,
Or on the craggy cliffs, to sit and muse
In silence on the vastness of the night;
He does not isolate himself from earth
And earth's inhabitants. And think you not
That, having seen the throng of men, one needs
To flee beneath the thick and shady trees,
And that the thirst for truth, for peace, for right,
For justice, and for light, grows in the soul,
After so many false and lying things?
My brothers have for ever all my heart,
And far from them in body, I am near
In spirit, looking at and judging fate;
And to complete the rough-hewn human soul,
I hold above the people, downward bent,
The urn of pity; ceaselessly I pour,
Yet constantly refill it. But I take
For cover the pine woods — with heavy shades.

Oh I have seen the wretched crowds so near,
Have known the cries, the blows, the insults heaped
On venerable heads, and cowards grown
To power through civil broils, and judges fit
For others' judgment only, and vile priests
Serving God and defiling, preaching for
And witnessing against Him. I have seen
The want of beauty that our beauty shows;
The evil in our good, and in our truth
The falsehood, and have watched mere nothingness
Beneath the proud, triumphal arches pass.
Ah, I have seen enough him who corrodes,
And him who flees, and him who yields, till now,
Old, spent, and conquered, I have this for joy,
To dream in quietude in some dark spot.
There while I bleed, I muse; and if perchance

A god should offer me youth, glory, love,
Strength, victory — would I return to towns,
Yet do I find it good to have a lair
Within the forests, for by no means sure
Am I, that even then I would consent.

II.

What in this earth of ours? A storm of souls,
In this gloom where we wandering pilots reach
No shore but rocks, mistaking them for ports;
Amid the tempest of desires, of cries,
Of transports, loves, vows, sorrows,— heaps of clouds,—
The fleeting kisses of those prostitutes
We call ambition, fortune and success;
Before the suffering Job's: "What do I know?"
The trembling Pascal's: "What then do I think?"
In this preposterous and fierce expense
Of popes, of kings, of Cæsars, Satan-made;
In presence of the fate which turns and turns
His capstan from which ever flow — and hence
The terror of the poor philosophers —
The same waves and the same catastrophes;
In this corroding nothingness, and false
And lying chaos, what at last man sees
Clearly is this: Above our sorrows, falls,
And failures due, the reign of innocence,
And sovereignty of innocent things and pure.
Being given the human heart, the human mind,
Our yesterday in gloom, our morrow dark,
All the disasters, all the hatreds, wars,
Our progress checked by heavy, dragging chains,
All round us, even among the best, remorse,
And all the throng of living things o'erwhelmed

By winds, which blow from out the skies in tears,
In truth, 'tis salutary for the mind
And good, among the interwoven boughs,
So many and so black, to contemplate
Sometimes, athwart the ills which seem to spread
Betwixt the heavens and us like veils, a peace
Deep and profound and made of shining stars;
It is of this God thought, what time He placed
The poets near the cradles made for sleep.

TO MY GRANDSON

Viens, mon George

Come hither, George. Ah! sons of sons of ours
With childhood's voice recall lost morning hours.
In our abodes, dull winter's darkening,
They scatter roses and the light of spring.
Their laughter brings warm tears to stony eyes,
And makes cold thresholds thrill with sweet surmise;
One radiant smile disperses all the gloom
Of heavy years that bend us to the tomb.
A child's hand leads us 'mong th' old vanished years,—
Sweet day by day, with new flowers deckt, appears.
Amazed, we wander all the lost paths through,
With lighter hearts suffused with heavenlier blue.
A child that blossoms sets old age aflower;
Grandpapa enters blithe Aurora's bower
With little ones around him triumphing.
Dwarfed to a child's small stature, lo! a wing
Grows, and we watch, with sense of sweet surprise,
'Mong spotless souls, our dark soul seek the skies.

GEORGE AND JEANNE

Moi qu'un petit enfant rend tout à fait stupide

I, WHOM a little child makes far from wise,
Have two,— sweet George and Jeanne; in this one's eyes
My sunlight dwells, by this one's hand I'm led;
Jeanne's but ten months, o'er George two years have sped.
Divinely subtle are their baby-ways,
And from their trembling utterance love essays
To catch the birth-star song ere it take flight;
While I — like even darkening into night,
Whose destiny hath lost the light of day —
Take heart to sing: "What dawn so fair as they!"
New heavens are opened wide at each child-word;
My soul's intent to hear what they have heard;
Old thoughts are banished by the sweet new thought,
Desires, ambitions, projects, things of nought,
Matters of weighty moment, fade away
As grows the sunlight of my darlings' day;
All birds that brood in darkness ply swift wings
As all the choir of morn more blithely sings.
Ah! tottering children guide one's steps aright.
Behold them! hear them; every brow grows bright,
All hearts beat happily that near them beat
In chime with baby-counsels sacred, sweet.
In all my life they're merged; in smiles or tears,
In all my sorrowful or joyous years,
Nought have I known so precious as the sense
Of smiles of childhood cleaving darkness dense,
Or brightening common sunlight: I behold
From baby's cradle steal these rays of gold.

At eve I watch them slumbering. Sweet shut eyes
And placid brows o'ershadowed like the skies,
When through soft veils the starry lights first beam,
Amaze me, murmuring: "What can be their dream?"
George dreams of cakes, perchance, of playthings fine,
Dog, cock, or cat; Jeanne chats with friends divine;
Then their eyes open wide, and make the whole world shine.

Their dawn, alas! marks growth of our decline.

They prattle. Do they talk? As doth the flower
To the wood-brooklet; as, in childhood's hour,
Their father to his sister, laughing gay;
Or as I chattered all the livelong day
Unto my brothers, while our sire stood near
And watched us gambol in the sunlight clear
Of Rome, in days long dead which never die.
Jeanne, whose bright eyes all bluest flowers outlive,
Whose fingers frail still capture faery things,
With bare arms fluttering like an angel's wings,
Harangues, in songs where floats a starry sign,
George, a boy-babe or baby-god divine.
O bluest heaven, no mortal speech is hers!
In such sweet strains the wandering wind confers
With fragrant groves, with waves on summer seas;
Grey pilots off the shores of ancient Greece
Erst left their helms, thus lured by syren's voice
To sorrow, as Jeanne now lures us to rejoice.
'Tis May-month music born beneath the sun's
Bright glance, with changeful burthen, "I love!"
"loved once!"
It is the tremulous language filled with light
Which lisps to life each little child's delight,—

Beguiled by April, vast, bewildering,
They babble at vast windows of the Spring.
These strange sweet notes which Jeanne pipes to her brother
Are those one amorous bird trills to another;
Such subtle questions bees to flowers propound,
And simple flowers to sparrows more profound;
Of spheral harmonies soft undersong
It is, and doth the angelic choir prolong;
Heaven's visions are revealed in infant-strains;
Heaven's mystery, perchance, Jeanne's song explains,—
For little ones but yesterday came thence,
Bearing star-secrets through our darkness dense.
O George! O Jeanne! your voices thrill my heart!
In such a song stars only could take part.
Their eyes upon me light my whole soul through,
And all its darkness breaks to heavenly blue.
Jeanne smiles bewildered; George has bold bright eyes;
Both totter,— inebriate pets from Paradise!

LÆTITIA RERUM

Tout est pris d'un frisson subit

All nature thrills with joyfulness,
The winter flies, and hides away,
The year throws off its faded dress,
The earth puts on its best array.

Now all things new and stirring are,
Youth wantons bright in every place,
Love's beauty-season everywhere
Is mirrored in the fountain's face.

Trees look their best — All flowers anew,
Try which shall greatest charms reveal,
Each decks itself in fairest hue —
The ugliest e'en are full of zeal.

Nosegays sprout from the mountain side,
Light leaves from breezes, kisses take;
June laughs to see so Sunday-fied
The common people of the brake.

Yes, 'tis an universal *fête,*
Thistles, those rustics, join the cheer,
In summer's palace, fine and great
The stars light up the chandelier.

Grass now is cut — soon comes the corn,
The mower sleeps beneath the May,
And upon every breeze is borne
The fragrance of the new-made hay.

Who sings? The minstrel of the night!
The chrysalis no more is found;
The grub is winged, and takes to flight,
Casting his fetters to the ground.

The water spider swims his round,
Shady the vines, the skies are clear.
Day trembles, gnats with buzzing sound
Pursue and whisper in your ear.

The bee flits on from bloom to bloom,
Hornets and wasps are on the wing;
To all these tipplers of perfume
A tap is opened by the spring.

Enters — his shirt in crumpled plight —
The drone who lives to sleep and dine;
A Lily is a napkin white,
A Pink a breaker brimmed with wine.

Flies drink the red and gold that lie
Within the blooms that half expand;
The drunkard is the butterfly,
Roses the taverns close at hand.

Full are they of ecstatic glee,
Tipplers true liberty possess;
Writ on no flower do you see
"This is the home of soberness."

The providential luxury
Sparkles and shines with lavish store,
That unique, priceless book the sky
Is by the morning gilded o'er.

Children, within your glances bright,
I think the opening heaven to see;
Your laugh is like the Spring's delight,
Your tears are as the dawn to me.

WINDOWS OPEN IN GUERNSEY

J'entends des voix. Lueurs à travers a paupière

Voices.— A gleam across my half-shut eyes.—
Bells ringing at St. Peter's.— Bathers' cries:
"Come here, I tell you!" "No, come farther on!"
"No, it was here." "No, it was there." "It's gone!"
The birds are chattering, and Jeannie too:

George calling her.— That was a cock that crew.—
A brick, chipped by a trowel.— Horses pass
Along the alley.— A scythe cutting grass.—
Bangs.— Buzzings.— Workmen walking on the tiles.—
A military band, half-heard at whiles.—
Noises in port.— A row upon the quay.—
A kettle boiling.— Talk in French: "Merci!"
"Bonjour!" "Adieu!" No doubt it must be late,
For here's my redbreast singing at the gate.—
The din of hammers in a forge remote.—
Water poured out.— Pant of a packet-boat.—
Enter a fly.— To all one deep aside,
The infinite suspiration of the tide.

THE MISSING ONE

Pourquoi donc s'en est-il allé, le doux amour?

Sweet love, ah wherefore hast thou flown away?
They come an instant, shed a little day,
And pass. These darlings, whom we call our own,
Have other owners — are not ours alone.
— Are there not other twain, then, left to you,
Old man? — Oh yes, I see them; there are two;
There might have been a third.— It is the hour
To seek the paths the hanging woods embower,
Swarming with birds, whose number God alone
Knows — who must vanish to the vast unknown,
They also.— Let me take them for a ride,
White hat, and little barefoot, side by side:
I'll push the carriage.— Cloudless are the skies;
The flowering fields resemble paradise;
The lizard flashes o'er the willow's root;
O'erhead the redbreast is no longer mute.

Joan is not two years old, and George scarce three;
So he takes charge of her; a grown man he;
All little girls like her are his delight;
He stands in admiration at the sight
Of those sweet rosy fingers; he compares,
Giving himself all sorts of manly airs,
The great hands with the small ones, his with hers,
And shows her off before the passengers,
And bursts out laughing. He can toddle, he!
This mite can get about! Joan laughs, to see
George laughing; in her basket little Joan
Is very like a queen upon her throne;
She is lovely: so the oak-tree whispers low
To the horse-chestnut, and the elm-trees show
Her beauty to the maples; such the due
Of infancy, beneath this vault of blue.
George knows his size; he laughs, but he protects,
And Joan relies upon his intellects.
George criticizes with an air severe
This child — who sucks her thumb at times, I fear.
How full the boskage is, of butterflies!
George says "Let me get down;" wants exercise;
We lisp, we skip together, I and they;
The paths are winding, and we lose our way.
How charming is their pleasure! How they sing
Carols of praise, through all their chattering!
Joan covets every passing bird and moth;
George gets his dolly out, and rips the cloth,
And ponders; and both talk; and their glad cries
People the solitude with watching eyes.
George, as he eats a medlar or a pear,
Brings me his toy: and I, who am aware,
Better than George, what men are made of, and
The secrets of creation understand,
Sew the rent up, and the old puppet vamp.

"Don't go upon the grass, George; it is damp."
The doll by Joan, the branches by the breeze
Are nursed to sleep. Under the solemn trees
We feel God present; their calm influence
Blends with the happiness of innocence;
George gives his orders; Joan and I obey;
The nursemaid sings them an old Norman lay,
Such as one hears at night in northern lands;
George with his feet keeps time; Joan claps her hands,
And my heart swells at their sweet revelries.

I am smiling; but you saw my tears, old trees!
You will not think that I can e'er forget
That little one, whose sun of life is set!

THE SIESTA

Elle fait au milieu du jour son petit somme

Safe sheltered from the noon-tide glare,
And noises of the busy day,
There sleeps, serene and free from care,
Jeanette, my child, tired out with play.

They, more than we, the dreamland need,
Those children fresh from Heaven's own smile;
The world is cold and bleak indeed
For gentle hearts that know no guile.

She seeks the angels and the fays,
Titania, Puck, and Ariel too;
With cherubs she in fancy plays
'Mid sylvan groves and skies of blue.

O, great our wonder could we know
The hidden joys of that blest sleep;
What dazzling sights, what visions glow,
While watch her guardian angels keep!

Thus at the still meridian hour
When birds are mute and winds are stayed,
When e'en each fragile leaf and flower
Forgets to tremble in the glade,

Jeanette takes her siesta, then,
And her mamma can also rest,
For nature wearies even when
We're helping those we love the best.

These tiny feet of roseate hue
Are resting like the peaceful soul;
The cradle lace of azure blue
Seems an immortal's aureole.

There looks to my enraptured sight
A rosy light amidst the folds.
I laugh, and sadness takes its flight;
A radiant star that cradle holds.

The cooling shadows round her creep,
The wind holds back and dares not blow;
When suddenly from out her sleep
Her eyes re-ope with morn-like glow.

Her lovely arms she first extends,
Then foot and foot with charming grace,
And now her mother o'er her bends,
And gazes on her darling's face.

She thinks of all the sweetest names
To call her for her own dear sake,
And then 'twixt smiles and tears exclaims,
"You horror! there you are awake!"

THE MOON

I.

Jeanne songeait, sur l'herbe assise

COUCHED 'mong the grass, with bright, grave brow
Jeanne thought;
I came quite close: "Jeanne, tell me, is there aught
You want?"— for I obey these charming dears,—
Submissive slaves of all their smiles or tears,
Diviner of thoughts that pass through heads divine.
Jeanne answered me: "To see some beasts, I pine."
An ant just then appeared 'mong grasses tall;
"Look, look!" I cried. But Jeanne scarce looked at all:
"No, no! the beasts are always big."

Their dream
Is grandeur. Ocean with his boundless stream
Allures them, cradled by the conquering might
Of waves and winds that roar in endless flight.
They need the wondrous, love the world's worst dread.
"I grieve no elephant's at hand," I said;
"But is there nothing else which I can get?"
With tiny finger skyward fixed, my pet
Cried, "That!"— The calm hour 'twas when daylight dies,
And in hushed heaven I saw the full moon rise.

II.

You want the moon? Yes; draw it from the well: —
No; from the sky! Alack, all efforts fail.
'Tis always thus. Dear little ones, you crave
A toy from heaven, so in void air I wave
My hands to catch fair Phœbe in her flight.
The blessed lot of grandsire once fell light
Upon my head and made a gentle crack.
Though fate such brilliant toys from me held back,
Towards you I feel he should be far more kind.
But come, let's reason. George and Jeanne now mind!
God watches us, and being Himself a true
Old grandpapa, He knows what one dare do,
And takes good care to be upon His guard.
A grand-dad loves his pets, and thinks it hard
All baby-orders he cannot obey:
So, lest a silly old man should have his way,
God takes the stars, not yet to cradles given,
And hangs them on the highest hooks of heaven.

III.

"What greedy little rascals!" mother cries;
"They long for all that meets their roving eyes,—
Cakes, cherries, apples, all must pleasure yield.
If they but hear a cow low in a field,
'Tis, 'Quick! some milk!' They raise banditti's cries
If bags of bon-bons look a likely prize;
And now they'd have the moon!"

Why not? I hate
The pettiness of those miscalled the great,
And love, amazed, the grandeur of the small.

Ah, yes! an infant's soul expands for all.
I'm lost in thought before such greed as sees
Worlds shadow-girt, and stammers: "If you please!"
If it were mine to give, indeed, yon moon
Should in a moment be my pet's bright boon.

I know not what they'd make of thee, 'tis true,
But yet, O, moon, I feel thou art their due.
Thy heaven where Swedenborg still travels on,
Thy vast abyss with all its mystery wan,
I would entrust unto the children's care.
That sombre sphere still spinning through thin air,
With jagged craters no loud storm assails,
With solitudes of shadow and death, with vales
Blissful as Edens or like hells accursed,
And awful mountain-vistas light-immersed,
Methinks yon little kneeling ones would make
A holier place of for the angels' sake:
In it they'd place their love, their hope, their prayer,
And the vast weird adventuress should bear
To God profound the thoughts of sweet small hearts.
When the child slumbers dream by dream departs
To holier realms than ours can ever reach.
A new child-faith unto the world I preach:
If little fearless darlings set their love
On something sparkling bright in heaven above,
I feel they ought to have it. That a sphere
Should be ruled over by a child is clear.
Ev'n our demerit masters many things.
Oh! what a lesson to astonished kings,
Seeing a world by infant-hands controlled!
To little angels crowned with locks of gold,
To them who'd blithely reign by love's sole sway,
I'd give vast worlds immersed in wondrous day;

Those, too, by darkling spirits blindly led,—
The enormous circle of the planets dread.
Why not? To them who have no thought of ill
The power is given to wield a world at will.
Yes! often when my thought gets free of earth,
Musing on innocent love's transcendent worth,
I deem there must be, in some heaven unknown,
Some angel grander than our dreams have shown,
Bidden by God, in some supreme sweet hour,
On souls of children gifts of stars to shower.

EVENING

Le brouillard est froid

Cold is the fog, and the grey mists rise,
And the herds of oxen to water go.
Black clouds the pale wan moon peeps through,
And seems to light you, as by surprise.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The traveller walks, dark heaths between,
Dark shade to left and dark shade to right,
Pale is the west, and the east is light,
Here twilight, and there the moon is seen.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The witch squats down, and her lip sticks up,
To the ceiling the spider has fixed its net,
The goblin is in the marsh fire set
Like a pistil of gold, in a tulip's cup.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

On the hungry billow the lugger flies,
And shipwreck watches the mast alway;
The wind says "to-morrow"— the sea "to-day,"
The voices you hear are despairing cries.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The coach from Avranches goes to Fougère,
Cracking its whip like a lightning flash.
Now is the hour, when rave and clash,
Wondrous sounds in the murky air.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

In the deep thick woods flare brilliant lights,
The old graveyard is a-top of the hill;
Whence does God find all the black to fill
The broken hearts, and the sleepless nights?

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

Silvery pools quiver over the sand,
The sea hawk sits on the chalk cliff high,
The herdsman follows, with awe struck eye,
The flight of devils o'er sea and land.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

From the chimney pot rises a long grey flag,
The woodcutter plods with his load of wood,
You hear, 'mid the rush of the mountain flood,
The crash of the boughs which the torrents drag.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The starved wolf dreams he the sheepfold seeks,
The rivers speed, and the dark clouds flit,
And behind the pane, where the lamp is lit,
Dear little children have rosy cheeks.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS — PUBLIC OPINION

Les lions, c'est des loups.— C'est tres méchant les bêtes

FIVE YEARS OLD. Lions are wolfs.

SIX YEARS OLD. Wild beasts are nasty things.

FIVE YEARS OLD. Yes.

SIX YEARS OLD. Little birds look horrid, with their wings.
They are dirty.

FIVE YEARS OLD. Yes.

SIX YEARS OLD. The serpents!

FIVE YEARS OLD. Made of skin.

SIX YEARS OLD. That monkey — mind! He'll pull
your bonnet in.

FIVE YEARS OLD (*looking at the tiger*).
Another wolf!

SIX YEARS OLD. Do come and see the bears
Going to bed.

FIVE YEARS OLD. Pretty!

SIX YEARS OLD. It climbs up stairs.

FIVE YEARS OLD (*looking at the elephant*).
Its horns are in its mouth.

SIX YEARS OLD. What I like best
Is elephants; they are the enormousest.

SEVEN YEARS OLD (*coming and tearing them away
from contemplation of the elephant*).
O come away, come quick; do you suppose
He does not want to *beat* you, with his nose?

TO GEORGE

Mon doux Georges, viens voir une ménagerie

MY George, to some Menagerie come on,
Buffon or Circus, anywhere will do:
Still in Lutetia visit Babylon,
And without leaving Paris,— Timbuctoo.

Those Leopards see, that were from Tyre ta'en,
The growling Bear, the Boa's silent might;
Zebra, Ounce, Jackal, and those poets twain,
The sun-drunk Eagle — Vulture filled with night.

The wily Lynx, the Snake that both ways rolls,
To which his treacherous friend Job likens well,
Black Tigers, through whose ebon mask two holes
Of livid flame disclose the fires of hell.

To see wild birds — the shiver of their wings —
Is nice; we'll view, while safe as bars can make,
Wolves, Jaguars, and Gazelles, slim graceful things,
And mark the beauty of the painted snake.

Leave noise of men. Come to the animals.
Let's lean athwart the stifling shade around,
O'er lower griefs, and vague reproachful calls,
O'er tangled steps of mysteries profound.

For beasts are shade, in darkness wandering
You know not what they hear, what understand;
Haggard their cries, their eyes death-glances fling,
Yet their assertion is sublime and grand.

We, who here reign, what useless things we say
And know not of the evil which we do;
Truth comes, we drive it as a foe away,
And against reason, reasons have to show.

Corbière at bar — Frayssinous in the church
I much inferior to wild beasts conceive;
The soul, in forest, learns, without a search —
I doubt in temples, on the mount believe.

God darkly names Himself by Night's dim word;
Wild Pelion than Quirinal awes us more;
'Tis well, when we the talk of men have heard,
To go and hear the mighty Lion roar.

TO JEANNE

Je ne te cache pas que j'aime aussi les bêtes

THAT I too like the beasts I freely own;
You they amuse, and me they teach; I feel
That not for nought in those fierce heads is shown
By God the mystic gloom that woods reveal.

Curious, and born to pity and believe,
To ask (watching the asp crawl 'neath the rose)
Why woman fears that Satan will deceive:
While flowers fear not the snakes however close.

While we impose commandments on the earth
Kings copying apes, who deeds of Kings repeat,
Doubtful which race gave to the other birth —
— Below in fated dread beneath our feet,

A dim strange world with wonder sees us now
And dreams — beneath a yoke too often vile
The lowly monster, and wan brute we bow,
Deeming us Gods, though we are fiends the while.

O tragic unions! Laws past fathoming!
Know we the final word? see we the end?
What hideous spectre may from Venus spring?
What Angel from Behemoth may descend?

Gulf! Height! Transfiguration! Mystery!
The soul shall cast that rag, the body by!
The creature abject now sublime shall be,
The hated grub the much loved butterfly.

HOW TERRIBLE THE FACE OF BRUTES

La face de la bête est terrible

How terrible the face of Brutes! The Unknown
We feel, th' Eternal problem darkly shown,
Unfathomed, which we Nature designate:
We gaze on shapeless shadow, chance or fate,
Rebellion, slavery, the hated yoke,
When in the Lion's dreadful face we look.
The Monster stormy, hoarse, wild — but not free —
Stupor! What means that strange complexity,
Splendour and horror mixed, the Universe
Contending good and ill, blessing and curse;
Where stars, that brilliant livid swarm, we trace
Seeming in prison ta'en, fleeing through space,
Tossed out at hazard as we toss a die,
For ever chained, yet seeking liberty?
What is that marvel, heavenly, horrible,
Where, in the Eden seen, we guess a Hell? —
Where hopes betrayed — dread thought! sink out of sight,
Infinite suns, in night as infinite;
Where in the brute, of God is lost the trace?

When they behold the Monster face to face,
The Seers, rapt dreamers of the forest drear,
Wise prophets who mysterious voices hear,
Feel somewhat in the brute immense and dread.
For them the bitter grin of that dark head

Is the abyss, which shuns their scrutiny,
Th' Eternal secret which can brook no spy,
Which lets not in its mystery intrude
Those deep, pale thinkers of the solitude;
Men to whom darkness lays its secrets bare
Feel the Sphinx angry grow, and stands their hair
On end — their blood within their veins runs dry
Before the frown of the dark prodigy.

JEANNE ASLEEP

Elle dort; ses beaux yeux se rouvriront demain

She sleeps! her eyes will soon expand again.—
My finger which she holds fills all her hand.
I read, while that nought wakes her I take care.
The pious journals! — All insult me there.
One treats as madmen all who read my lines,
One to the hangman all my works assigns,
Another, while a tear bedews his lids,
Kindly the passers-by to stone me bids.
My writings all are vile and poisoning,
Where all black snakes of ill their spirals wring;
One credits hell, and me its priest declares,
Or Antichrist, or Satan, and one fears
At eve to meet me on the forest's brink.
One hands me hemlock, cries another "Drink!"
I sacked the Louvre — the hostages I killed,
And fancied mobs with lust of plunder filled;
Paris in flames with red my brow should dye.
I'm cut-throat, butcher, thug, incendiary,
Miser — and should have been less fierce and base
Had but the Emperor given me a place;
I'm general poisoner and murderer.
Thus all these voices I around me hear

Heap insult on me without stint or stay.
The child sleeps on as if its dream would say
"O father! yet be quiet, yet benign —"
I feel her hand is gently pressing mine.

CRADLE SONG

Je veille. Ne crains rien. J'attends que tu t'endormes

Fear nothing; I am watching till thou sleepest.
Nought shall harm thee;
The angels will be coming soon, to kiss thy lids to rest.
I would that no ill vision should approach thee, to alarm thee
Or molest.

I would that finding thee asleep, with thy hand clasped in mine, dear,
The wind should change its note of storm to notes of lutes, the while;
And that the frown of midnight o'er thy slumbers should decline, dear,
To a smile.

It is a poet leans beside thy curtains, as they tremble;
He speaks to them, to them he whispers many a tender thing;
A poet is thy lover, and his lullabies resemble
Flowers in spring.

He is as April's fragrance on the turf, when May is coming;
As May herself, whose blooms the linnets rifle, as they please;

His accents are a murmur of the spirit, like the humming
Of the bees.

He is the kindly sower of the seeds of mirth and lightness;
But if the banded monarchs and their liveried swarms invade,
If he behold the eyeballs of the tiger, darting brightness
Through the shade,

If he see Rome, the basilisk — if Loyola, the spider —
Bismarck, the vulture — doing aught, after their kind, amiss,
He groans, and opens in his verse, deep as the grave and wider,
An abyss.

Enough, no more of cradle-songs; the future these inherit,
The people and the rights of man — the monarch and his state,
Is as a driven whirlwind in the storm, whereon his spirit
Rides elate.

Welcome him, France! Bethink thee of thy former pride of story;
He comes for thy deliverance, with the angel of the Lord,
The spirit of freedom in his heart, and in his eyes the glory
Of the sword.

And his weak thoughts, erst tossing like the prows
upon the ocean,
Reeling as in the battle-shock a tattered ensign
reels,
Mount like the car of morning, with the pinions of
devotion
On their wheels.

THE CICATRIX

Une croûte assez laide est sur la cicatrice

An ugly cicatrix was crusted o'er;
'Twas Jeanne's delight to pick and bleed the sore.
She comes and shows her hand in piteous case,
And says "I've pulled the skin from off the place."
I scold! she cries; but when her tears I see,
I'm done! "I yield; come, make it up with me,
Jeanne! On condition that again you smile."
The sweet child sprang into my arms; the while
She said, with gently patronizing air —
"I love you, so no more my hand I'll tear."
Now both are pleased and on equality,
She with my kindness, with her pardon I.

A SLAP

De la petite main sort une grosse tape

From the small hand was dealt a hearty tap —
"Grandfather, scold her." "What, give you a
slap?"
The culprit you with greater love behold.
"Pray scold."—Says Age—"I can no longer scold,
Nothing but smiles are left me now-a-day."

Nero I've seen proscribe, Judas betray,
Satan victorious — rogues and ruffians reign.
When one's deep heart has proved on these disdain,
When one has spent indignant rage and hates,
When, viewing all that the Church tolerates,
Which pulpits hail, and which the priest calls right;
When dauntless one has raved on some rough height,
When, on the invasion of the Parthian horde,
On Bonaparte's black crime and perjured word;
On laws and night doomed to a bloody tomb,
Barbés from Paris, Brutus spurned from Rome;
On tyrants, safe afloat, while wrecked the state —
When one has poured vials of lyric hate,
When one has dared the prison roof remove,
And drawn forth all the clamour from above,
The imprecations, lightnings, hisses, cries,
Of that dread holy cavern in the skies;
When one has during days that seemed as nights,
Rolled all the voices of the gulf — the slights —
The darkness, groans and tears for France betrayed,
Isaiah heaped on Juvenal; the shade
And ruin of infuriate poesy,
Like rocks of bitter hatred in the sky:
When 'gainst one's wrath, the tomb no shelter gave,
When eagles one has struck, the dove to save —
Nimrod, Napoleon, Cæsar one has beat,
And dared with scorn the whole Pantheon treat,
And oft to quake that lofty building taught,
And on and under earth has Justice wrought,
And all miasmas far and wide disperst,
Home somewhat weary one returns at last.
You don't get angry with familiar flies,

The little pecks that come from aviaries,
Sweet mocking laughter from melodious nests,
And all these little gods, or little pests,
Which babes and brats we call, enchantment bring;
And when they try to bite, you think they sing.
What peace in pardon! — Dante — Cato be,
Against the mighty, not the small. Shall we
Make a gruff voice, 'gainst the soft cry that charms,
Or shall we against sparrows don our arms?
Bah! 'Gainst the dawn you don't in anger come,
And thunder should be mild and sweet at home.

MY JEANNE

Ma Jeanne, dont je suis doucement insensé

My Jeanne, whom I tenderly love and adore,
Is queenly in right of her sex: all its lore
Is to beautiful be, to have arms white as snow,
And to make by a look the worst rebel bend low;
To know aught of nothing save bouquets and dress,
To enthrall the most learned by smile or caress,
To be gentle as Heaven, as fair as the rose,
To the sad or ungrateful, the poor or morose.
Jeanne knows all about it, for she is aged three;
And she is the flower of my old age, for me
To contemplate, cherish — my joy, my delight!
My verse, which seems worthless when she is in sight,
Is inspired by her glances, and filled with her chat.
Her dress is a wonder, bewitching her hat,
Her red shoes are dainty, her movements as light

As a fly's on the wing; and the colours as bright
Of the costumes she shows off with womanly pride,
With a glimpse of the womanly spirit inside.
'Tis her due to be queen, to be fair is her right.
When her sweet reign commences my wisdom takes
flight.

JEANNE

Jeanne était au pain sec dans le cabinet noir

JEANNE, in the dark room, had dry bread for dinner,
Guilty of something wrong; and I — the sinner —
Crept up to see that prisoner in her cell,
And slipped — on the sly — some comfits to her.
Well!
Against the laws, I own! Those, who with me
Support the order of society,
Were furious! Vainly murmured little Jeanne,
"Indeed, indeed, I never will again
Rub my nose with my thumb! I won't make pussy
Scratch me!" They only cried, "The naughty hussy!
She knows how weak you are and wanting sense,
And sees you only laugh at grave offence:
Government is not possible! All day
Order is troubled, influence slips away,
No rules, no regulations! nought can mend her;
You ruin everything!" Then I — the offender —
I hang my head, and say, "There's no excuse!
I know I err; I know by such abuse,
Such wrong indulgence, nations 'go to pot;'
Put me upon dry bread!" "Why should we not?
We will! you merit it!" But my small maid
From her dark corner looking unafraid
With eyes divine to see, full of a sense

Of settled justice, in their innocence,
Whispered, for me to hear, "Well, if they do,
I shall bring comfits, Grandpapa, to you."

IN THE WOODS

Je suis des bois l'hote fidèle

In the free wood I like to stray,
Nature's true flowers must I love;
When Autumn comes the swallows say,
"'Tis time for us to pack and move."

When frost and snow give way to Spring,
I see the buds, now coming back,
Are not in want of anything,
And in the forest nothing lack.

I say to brambles, "Maidens, grow,"
To the wild thyme, "Perfume the air,"
And to the line of flowers that blow
On banks, "Now make your hems with care."

I watch the door half opening,
The wind that's blowing from the height,
Because some roguery to bring
Is that deceiver's chief delight.

I start as soon as dawn awakes,
To see that nothing goes awry;
Of the precautions April takes,
'Gainst January's perfidy.

All rise again, though all must die,
And I behold with raptured thought,

Youth's unrestrained recovery
By envious darkness vainly fought.

I love the rustling copses dun,
Red lichens, and the ivy green,
And all the adornments which the sun
Invents to make the ruin's sheen.

When flowery May bedecks with plumes,
Old dismal discontented towers;
I bid those antiquated tombs
Leave Spring at will to scatter flowers.

THE SPOIL-SPORT

Les belles filles sont en fuite.

The pretty girls are all in flight,
And, trembling, know not where to cower.
Blue-eyed as morn, black-eyed as night,
They danced a-near the old church tower.

One sang to keep the footing true:
The lads, with faces brightening
For joy o' the sound of dancing, flew,
Their caps aflower with blooms of spring.

Laughing and flushed with summer glee,
They tripped beneath the steeple-clock.
"I love Jane!" quoth the old oak tree;
"Ah, Susan, I!" sighed the amorous rock.

But the black fiend o' the sombre tower
Yelled loud to them: "Wretches! Away!"
His harsh breath brake the sweet dance bower,
Scattering the tiny feet from play.

Black eyes, blue eyes, all are fled;
E'en as at dawn beneath the rain
A flock of birds plies wing o'erhead,
Of the fickle April sunshine fain.

And this fell rout hath made, alas!
The mighty wood-lords dumb with care;
For maidens tripping on green grass
Make carol birds in the blue air.

"Who is this black man?" murmur they.
No note is heard; for that harsh cry
Hath scared the pretty ones far away,
And farther yet bird melody.

"Who is this black man?"—"I care not,"
A sparrow chirps, light-hearted thief.
They weep as dawn to weep has taught;
But a white daisy whispereth:

"I am about to explain these things.
You mark not how the dull world goes:
Butterflies love all blossomings,
But the owls love not even the rose!"

ORA AMA

Le long des berges court la perdrix au pied leste

The swift-foot Partridge scuds along the banks;
And as to make her join their choric ranks,
The circling clouds the virgin moon have ta'en.—
Dear little George, now tell me, shall we twain
Down there 'neath the old willow go and play.

Night falls — they bathe — the mower plods his way
Shouldering his scythe: he wipes his heated brow.
Gleams indistinct and vague does twilight throw
Upon the forms, all laughing in the brook.

The Vicar passes by and shuts his book;
Too late to read — the small remains of sun
Invite to prayer him who with love has done,
Love, prayer, are dawn and evening of the soul:

In nature much akin — 'neath love's control
And 'neath the power of prayer we kneel alone,
To you when you're a man will this be known.
Meanwhile my large-eyed child all this is told

To you, my George, as to my Charles of old.
— When die the rose wings, then the blue ones grow,
And prayer, no less than love does boldness show
And Love as prayer, does equal fear display.

Still in the open glade 'tis almost day.
The Angelus proclaims th' approach of night.
O sky sublime! dark mansion infinite!
Walls passing speech, obscure — illuminate!

How in the home of thunder penetrate?
Youth becomes thoughtful; age disquieted
Before th' unknown; vaguely with stars o'erspread
The trembling eve like shivering dawn we see.

Prayer is the gate, and Love the opening key.

SET FREE

Après ce rude hiver, un seul oiseau restait

At Winter's close one only bird remained
Within the cage which late a host contained,
A void was made in the great Aviary.
One Titmouse, late familiar but now shy,
Was left to solitude and dismal thought;
Cake, water, seed, to have, and want for nought —
To see a fly within its cage beguiled
Was its whole happiness, 'twas now grown wild;
No mate, not e'en a sparrow, had it got —
A cage is well, but a blank desert not! —
Sad bird to roost alone, and every morn
Alone to dress its feathers all forlorn.
The wretched little thing left in the lurch
Grew shy, with turning his deserted perch.
Sometimes, as a set task, he used to fly
From stick to stick with endless industry
And frantic speed. Then suddenly would sit,
Dumb, gloomy, sad, nor from his corner flit.
To see his feathers all puffed out, his eye,
His head put 'neath his wing though day was high,
One guessed his mourning, grief, and widowed state —
Lost every song and every tuneful mate.—
This morn I entered through the cage's door.

Two poles, a grot, a grove, and nothing more
Furnished the prison, where a fountain thrills: —
Wide curtains through the winter guard from chills.

At the dark giant's sight — the bird afraid,
Fled, high and low, to find concealing shade;
In agony of fright nought could assuage —
(The weak, dismayed, show impotence of rage),
He fluttered off before my appalling hand,
And I to catch him on a table stand.
Then terrified, o'ercome, and uttering cries,
He in a corner sank — I seized the prize.
What 'gainst a monster can an atom do?
How, when th' enormous phantom clutches you,
Can it — wan fragile captive! — be opposed?
It lay still in my hands, its eyes were closed,
Its beak was wide, its neck hung from distress,
Its wings seemed dead: dumb, sightless, motionless;
I felt its heart fast on its sides to strike.

To his bright sister Dawn is April like;
As dazzling he, as she is pink and fair.
As one who wakes and laughs, he has the air.
We're in the month of April, and my lawn,
My garden, and my neighbour's and the dawn,
All heaven and earth filled with that rapture are
Which in the flowers exhales — glows in the star!—
The furze in gala dress gilds the ravine,
Where the bees make their murmurings divine;
Bent o'er the cress, the myosotis dips
Its flowerets in the spring, and freshly sips.
The grass is happy — winter melts away;
Nature seems glad, that all things own her sway,
Scents, songs, and rays — and a kind host to be —
All space feels love.

I left the Aviary,
And toward the balcony, all ivied o'er,
Approached. The bird still in my hand I bore.

All things to throb, glow, laugh, renew, I see;
Then opening wide my hand, I said —"Be free."
Hasted the Bird 'mid waving boughs to fly,
And in the radiant Spring's immensity
I watched the little soul depart afar,
In that pink light where flames commingled are,
In the deep air, the countless trees above,
Flying to the vague call of nests and love.
Wildly it soared towards other wings; nor knew
Which palace best to choose; to boughs it flew,
To flowers, to streams, to woods, in Spring's device,
With ecstasy of entering Paradise.

Then in the light and in the clear expanse,
Seeing that flight, and that deliverance,
And that poor soul in port safe hid away —
Musing, I said —"Death's part I've played to-day."

JEANNIE ASLEEP

Jeanne dort; elle laisse, ô pauvre ange banni

JEANNIE is sleeping. Past the bounds of sense,
Her tender infant spirit wanders hence,
An exiled angel, as the sparrow flies
Among the cherry-trees in May. Her eyes
Gaze other-where than on this world below;
Ere she will taste our bitter cup of woe,
She for a moment would renew the tie
That links her soul through shadows to the sky.
Peace to her slumbers! Her vague murmurings,
Her hue transparent as a night-moth's wings,
Her even breath, her ringlets soft and bright,

Her calm, are all one image of delight;
The grandsire old, who knows his vanquisher,
In servitude contented watches her.

Beings like this of all things on the earth
Are least — and greatest. Mark and see the birth,
Upon her lips, of a faint innocent smile,
That comes one knows not whence. How fair the while
Her features! — and how deep the pregnancy
Of that faint smile, which out of mystery
Flashes upon the grandsire, and unrolls
To him alone its meaning! New-born souls,
Not yet bared of their glory, wear a light
From the far empyrean; and the sight
Of morning, blended with his evening, makes
An old man's heart grow softer, while he wakes.

Waken her not. She sleeps, a budding rose.
Leave her to dream in slumber, and compose
Her semblance of the most celestial hues
That glint in heaven. Ambrosial honey-dews
From lily on lily and out of dream on dream
She gathers; and her sylph-like soul would seem
To forage, in its "rosy pudency,"
Among her visions, as in flowers a bee.

THE EPIC OF THE LION

Un lion avait pris en enfant dans sa gueule

I.

A LION in his jaws caught up a child —
Not harming it — and to the woodland, wild

With secret streams and lairs, bore off his prey;
The beast, as one might cull a flower in May,
Had plucked this bud, not thinking wrong or right,
Mumbling its stalk, too proud or kind to bite,—
A lion's way, roughly compassionate.
Yet truly dismal was the victim's fate;
Thrust in a cave that rumbled with each roar,
His food wild herbs, his bed the earthy floor,
He lived, half-dead with daily frightening.
It was a rosy boy, son of a king;
A ten-year lad with bright eyes shining wide,
And save this son his majesty beside
Had but one girl — two years of age — and so
The monarch suffered, being old, much woe,
His heir the monster's prey, while the whole land
In dread both of the beast and king did stand;
Sore terrified were all: —

By came a Knight
That road, who halted, asking, "What's the fright?"
They told him, and he spurred straight for the den.

O, such a place! the sunlight entering in
Grew pale and crept, so grim a sight was shown
Where the gaunt Lion on the rock lay prone:
The wood, at this part thick of growth and wet,
Barred out the sky with black trunks closely set;
Forest and forester matched wondrous well!
Great stones stood near, with ancient tales to tell —
Such as make moorlands weird in Brittany —
And at its edge a mountain you might see,
One of those iron walls which shut off heaven;
The Lion's den was a deep cavern driven
Into the granite ridge, fenced round with oaks;
Cities and caverns are discordant folks,

They bear each other grudges! this did wave
A rustling threat to trespasser,—"Hence, knave!
Or meet my Lion!"

In the champion went.
The den had all the sombre sentiment
Which palaces display — deaths — murderings —
Terrors! — you felt "here dwells one of the kings:"
Bones strewn around showed that this mighty lord
Denied himself nought which his woods afford.
A rock-rift pierced by stroke of lightning gave
Such misty glimmer as a den need have:
What eagles might think dawn, and owls the dusk,
Makes day enough for kings of claw and tusk.
All else was regal, though! you understood
Why the majestic brute slept, as he should,
On leaves, with no lace curtains to his bed;
And how his wine was blood — nay, or instead,
Spring-water lapped *sans* napkin, spoon, or cup,
Or lackeys.

Being from spur to crest mailed up,
The champion enters.
In the den he spies
Truly a Mighty One! Crowned to the eyes
With shaggy golden fell — the Beast! — it muses
With look infallible; for, if he chooses,
The master of a wood may play at Pope,
And this one had such claws, there was small hope
To argue with him on a point of creed!
The Knight approached — yet not too fast, indeed;

His footfall clanged, flaunted his rose-red feather,
None the more notice took the Beast of either,
Still in his own reflections plunged profound;

Theseus a-marching upon that black ground
Of Sisyphus, Ixion, and dire hell,
Saw such a scene, murk and implacable:
But duty whispered "Forward!" so the Knight
Drew forth his sword: the Lion at that sight
Lifted his head in slow wise, grim to see.

The knight said: "Greeting! monstrous brute! to thee;
In this foul hole thou hast a child in keeping,—
I search its noisome nooks with glances sweeping,
But spy him not. That child I must reclaim,
Friends are we if thou renderest up the same;
If not — I too am lion, thou wilt find;
The king his lost son in his arms shall bind;
While here thy wicked blood runs, smoking-hot,
Before another dawn."

"I fancy not,"
Pensive the Lion said.
The Knight strode near,
Brandished his blade and cried: "Sire! have a care!"
The Beast was seen to smile — ominous sight! —
Never make lions smile! Then joined they fight,
The man and monster, in most desperate duel,
Like warring giants, angry, huge, and cruel;
Like tigers crimsoning an Indian wood,
The man with steel, the beast with claws as good;
Fang matching blade, hide mail, that sylvan lord
Hurled himself foaming on the flashing sword:
Stout though the Kinght, the Lion stronger was,
And tore his brave breast under its cuirass,
And striking blow on blow with ponderous paw,
Forced plate and rivet off, until you saw

Through all the armour's cracks the bright blood spirt,
As when clenched fingers make a mulberry squirt;
And piece by piece he stripped the iron sheath,
Helm, armlets, greaves — gnawed bare the bones beneath,
Scrunching that hero, till he sprawled — alas!
Beneath his shield, all blood, and mud, and mess:
Whereat the Lion feasted: — then it went
Back to its rocky couch and slept content.

II.

Next came a hermit:
He found out the cave;
With girdle, gown, and cross — trembling and grave —
He entered. There that Knight lay, out of shape,
Mere pulp: the Lion waking up did gape,
Opened his yellow orbs, heard some one grope,
And — seeing the woollen coat bound with a rope,
A black peaked cowl, and inside that a man —
He finished yawning and to growl began:
Then, with a voice like prison-gates which creak,
Roared, "What would'st thou?"
"My King."
"King?"
"May I speak?"

"Of whom?"
"The Prince."
"Is that what makes a King?"
The monk bowed reverence, "Majesty! I bring
A message — wherefore keep this child?"

"For that
Whene'er it rains I've some one here to chat."
"Return him."
"Not so."
"What then wilt thou do?
Would'st eat him?"
"Ay — if I have naught to chew?"
"Sire! think upon His majesty in woe!"
"They killed my dam," the Beast said, "long ago."
"Bethink thee, sire, a king implores a king."
"Nonsense — he talks — he's man! when my notes ring
A Lion's heard!"
"His only boy!"
"Well, well!
He hath a daughter."
"She's no heir."
"*I* dwell
Alone in this my home, 'mid wood and rock,
Thunder my music, and the lightning-shock
My lamp; — let his content him."
"Ah! show pity."
"What means that word? is't current in your city?"
"Lion, thou'dst wish to go to heaven — see here!
I offer thee indulgence, and, writ clear,
God's passport to His paradise!"
"Get forth,
Thou holy rogue," thundered the Beast in wrath:
The hermit disappeared.

III.

Thereat left free,
Full of a lion's vast serenity,
He slept again, letting the still night pass:

The moon rose, starting spectres on the grass,
Shrouding the marsh with mist, blotting the ways,
And melting the black woodland to grey maze;
No stir was seen below, above no motion
Save of the white stars trooping to the ocean:
And while the mole and cricket in the brake
Kept watch, the Lion's measured breath did make
Slow symphony which held all creatures calm.
Sudden — loud cries and clamours, striking qualm
Into the heart of the quiet, horn and shout
Causing the solemn wood to reel with rout,
And all the nymphs to tremble in their trees,
The uproars of a midnight chase are these
Which shakes the shades, the marsh, mountain and stream,
And breaks the silence of their sombre dream.
The thicket flashed with many a lurid spark
Of torches borne 'mid wild cries through the dark;
Hounds, nose to earth, ran yelping through the wood,
And armed groups, gathering in the alleys, stood.
Terrific was the noise that rolled before;
It seemed a squadron; nay, 'twas something more —
A whole battalion, sent by that sad king,
With force of arms his little Prince to bring,
Together with the Lion's bleeding hide.

Which here was right or wrong? who can decide?
Have beasts or men most claim to live? God wots!
He is the unit, we the cipher-dots.

Well warmed with meat and drink those soldiers were,
Good hearts they bore — and many a bow and spear;
Their number large, and by a captain led
Valiant, whilst some in foreign wars had bled,

And all were men approved and firm in fight;
The Lion heard their cries, affronting night,
For by this time his awful lids were lifted;
But from the rock his chin he never shifted,
And only his great tail wagged to and fro.

Meantime, outside the cavern, startled so,
Came close the uproar of this shouting crowd.
As round a web flies buzzing in a cloud,
Or hive-bees swarming o'er a bear ensnared,
This hunter's legion buzzed, and swarmed, and flared.
In battle order all their ranks were set:
'Twas understood the Beast they came to get,
Fierce as a tiger's cunning — strong to seize —
Could munch up heroes as an ape cracks fleas,
Could with one glance make Jove's own bird look down;
Wherefore they laid him siege as to a town.
The pioneers with axes cleared the way,
The spearmen followed in close array,
The archers held their arrows on the string;
Silence was bid, lest any chattering
Should mask the Lion's footstep in the wood;
The dogs — who know the moment when 'tis good
To hold their peace — went first, nose to the ground,
Giving no tongue; the torches all around
Hither and thither flickered, their long beams
Through sighing foliage sending ruddy gleams: —
Such is the order a great hunt should have:
And soon between the trunks they spy the cave,
A black, dim-outlined hole, deep in the gloom,
Gaping, but blank and silent as the tomb,
Wide open to the night, as though it feared
As little all that clamour as it heard.
There's smoke where fire smoulders, and a town,

When men lay siege, rings tocsin up and down;
Nothing so here! therefore with vague dismay
Each stood, and grasp on bow or blade did lay,
Watching the horrid stillness of that chasm:
The dogs among themselves whimpered: a spasm
From the horror lurking in such voiceless places —
Worse than the rage of tempests — blanched all faces:
Yet they were there to find and fight this Thing,
So they advance, each bush examining,
Dreading full sore the very prey they sought;
The pioneers held high the lamps they brought:
"There! that is it! the very mouth of the den!"
The trees all round it muttered, warning men:
Still they kept step and neared it — look you now,
Company's pleasant, and there were a thou —
Good Lord! all in a moment, there's its face!

Frightful! — they saw the Lion! Not one pace
Further stirred any man; the very trees
Grew blacker with his presence, and the breeze
Blew shudders into all hearts present there:
Yet, whether 'twas from valour or wild fear,
The archers drew — and arrow, bolt, and dart
Made target of the Beast. He, on his part —
As calm as Pelion in the rain or hail —
Bristled majestic from the nose to tail,
And shook full fifty missiles from his hide;
Yet any meaner brute had found beside
Enough still sticking fast to make him yell
Or fly; the blood was trickling down his fell,
But no heed took he, glaring steadfastly;
And all those men of war, amazed to be
Thus met by so stupendous might and pride,
Thought him no beast, but some god brutified.

The hounds, tail down, slunk back behind the spears;
And then the Lion, 'mid the silence, rears
His awful face, and over wood and marsh
Roared a vast roar, hoarse, vibrant, vengeful, harsh,
A rolling, raging peal of wrath, which spread
From the quaking earth to the echoing vault o'er-
head,
Making the half-awakened thunder cry,
"Who thunders there?" from its black bed of sky.

This ended all! — sheer horror cleared the coast:
As fogs are driven by wind, that valorous host
Melted, dispersed to all the quarters four,
Clean panic-stricken by that monstrous roar;
Each with one impulse — leaders, rank and file,
Deeming it haunted ground, where Earth somewhile
Is wont to breed marvels of lawless might —
They scampered, mad, blind, reckless, wild with
fright.
Then quoth the Lion, "Woods and mountains! see,
A thousand men enslaved fear one beast free!"

As lava to volcanoes, so a roar
Is to these creatures; and, the eruption o'er
In heaven-shaking wrath, they mostly calm.
The gods themselves to lions yield the palm
For magnanimity. When Jove was king,
Hercules said, "Let's finish off the thing,
Not the Nemæan merely; every one
We'll strangle — all the lions." Whereupon
The lions yawned a "much obliged!" his way.

But this Beast, being whelped by night, not day —
Offspring of glooms — was sterner; one of those
Who go down slowly when their storm's at close;

His anger had a savage ground-swell in it:
He loved to take his naps, too, to the minute,
And to be roused up thus with horn and hound,—
To find an ambush sprung — to be hemmed round —
Targeted —'twas an insult to his grove!
He paced towards the hill, climbed high above,
Lifted his voice, and, as the sowers sow
The seeds down wind, thus did that Lion throw
His message far enough the town to reach.
"King! your behaviour really passes speech!
Thus far no harm I've wrought to him your son;
But now I give you notice — when night's done
I will make entry at your city-gate,
Bringing the Prince alive; and those that wait
To see him in my jaws — your lackey-crew —
Shall see me eat him in your palace too!"

Quiet the night passed, while the streamlets bubbled,
And the clouds sailed across the vault untroubled.

Next morning this is what was viewed in town:
Dawn coming — people going — some adown
Praying, some crying; pallid cheeks, swift feet,
And a huge Lion stalking through the street.

IV.

The quaking townsmen in the cellars hid;
How make resistance? briefly, no one did;
The soldiers left their posts, the gates stood wide;
'Twas felt the Lion had upon his side
A majesty so godlike, such an air —
That den, too, was so dark and grim a lair —
It seemed scarce short of rash impiety
To cross its path as the fierce Beast went by.

So to the palace and its gilded dome
With stately steps unchallenged did he roam,
In many a spot with those vile darts scarred still,
As you may note an oak scored with the bill,
Yet nothing recks that giant-trunk; so here
Paced this proud, wounded Lion, free of fear,
While all the people held aloof in dread,
Seeing the scarlet jaws of that great head
Hold up the princely boy — aswoon.

Is't true
Princes are flesh and blood? Ah, yes! and you
Had wept with sacred pity, seeing him
Swing in the Lion's mouth, body and limb:
The tender captive gripped by those grim fangs,
On either side the jowl helplessly hangs,
Deathlike, albeit he bore no wound of tooth.
And for the brute thus gagged it was, in sooth,
A grievous thing to wish to roar, yet be
Muzzled and dumb, so he walked savagely,
His pent heart blazing through his burning eyes,
While not one bow is stretched, no arrow flies;
They dreaded, peradventure, lest some shaft,
Shot with a trembling hand and faltering craft,
Might miss the Beast and pierce the Prince:

So, still
As he had promised, roaring from his hill,
This Lion, scorning town and townfolk sick
To view such terror, goes on straight and quick
To the King's house, hoping to meet there one
Who dares to speak with him: — outside is none!
The door's ajar, and flaps with every blast;
He enters it — within those walls at last! —
No man!

For, certes, though he raged and wept,
His Majesty, like all, close shelter kept,
Solicitous to live, holding his breath
Specially precious to the realm: now death
Is not thus viewed by honest beasts of prey,
And when the Lion found *him* fled away,
Ashamed to be so grand, man being so base,
He muttered to himself in that dark place
Where lions keep their thoughts: "This wretched King!
'Tis well, I'll eat his boy!" Then, wandering,
Lordly he traversed courts and corridors,
Paced beneath vaults of gold on shining floors,
Glanced at the throne deserted, stalked from hall
To hall — green, yellow, crimson — empty all!
Rich couches void, soft seats unoccupied!
And as he walked he looked from side to side
To find some pleasant nook for his repast,
Since appetite was come to munch at last
The princely morsel: — Ah! what sight astounds
That grisly lounger?

In the palace grounds
An alcove on a garden gives, and there
A tiny thing — forgot in the general fear,
Lulled in the flower-sweet dreams of infancy,
Bathed with soft sunlight falling brokenly
Through leaf and lattice — was that moment waking;
A little lovely maid, most dear and taking,
The Prince's sister; all alone — undressed —
She sate up singing: children sing so best.

A voice of joy, than silver lute-string softer!
A mouth all rose-bud blossoming in laughter!

A baby-angel hard at play! a dream
Of Bethlehem's cradle, or what nests would seem
If girls were hatched! — all these! Eyes, too, so blue
That sea and sky might own their sapphire new!
Neck bare, arms bare, pink legs and stomach bare!
Nought hid the roseate satin skin, save where
A little white-laced shift was fastened free;
She looked as fresh, singing thus peacefully,
As stars at twilight or as April's heaven;
A floweret — you had said — divinely given,
To show on earth how God's own lilies grow;
Such was this beauteous baby-maid; and so
The Beast caught sight of her and stopped —

And then
Entered: — the floor creaked as he stalked straight in.
Above the playthings by the little bed
The Lion thrust his shaggy massive head,
Dreadful with savage might and lordly scorn,
More dreadful with that princely prey so borne;
Which she, quick spying, "Brother! brother!" cried,
"Oh, my own brother!" and unterrified —
Looking a living rose that made the place
Brighter and warmer with its fearless grace —
She gazed upon that monster of the wood,
Whose yellow balls not Typhon had withstood.
And — well! who knows what thoughts these small heads hold?
She rose up in her cot — full height, and bold,
And shook her pink fist angrily at him.
Whereon — close to the little bed's white rim,
All dainty silk and laces — this huge Brute
Set down her brother gently at her foot,

Just as a mother might, and said to her —
"Don't be put out, now! there he is, dear! — there!"

THE SOULS THAT HAVE GONE

Ces âmes que tu rappelles

Those souls to memory dear,
Do ne'er return again,
But in some blissful sphere
For aye, alas! remain.

In those bright worlds above,
Of azure and of light,
Far, far from those they love,
Is theirs contentment quite?

We had, with arbours round,
A dwelling near Saint Leu.
How fair the flower-decked ground!
The sky above how blue!

Amid the fallen leaves,
We'd rove the forest o'er,
And oft on summer eves
Old ruined walls explore.

Our laughter was as gay
As rang through Eden's glade,
With something still to say
That had before been said.

We fairy tales reheard,
And happy were, God knows!
At sight of passing bird
Our joyous voices rose.

SPOILT CHILDREN

En me voyant si peu redoutable aux enfants

SEEING that children fear me not, and I
Am made to muse by conquering Infancy,
Staid, serious folk knit their dark brows amazed —
A Grandfather broke loose from bounds and crazed
Is what I am.— Wrapt in paternity
Nought but a good old headstrong smile am I.
Dear little ones, I'm Grandfather complete.
He loves those dwarfs with the sky's blue replete —
He longs to get the moon, Heaven's silver pelf,
For them, perhaps a little for himself.
Not sane in fact — 'tis terrible, I reign
Ill, and by fear will ne'er my realm restrain.
My subjects Jeanne and George, the Greybeard I,
Grandsire uncurbed, mad with benignity.
All laws I make them overleap, indeed
Their roseate commonwealth to crimes I lead,
Seduced by harmful popularity.
You may allow the old, whose night is nigh,
His love of grace, and laughter, and the morn.—
But of the babes whose crimes are not yet born,
I can but ask, Should a Grandsire be so
Anarchical as with his hand to show
As where in shade adventures may be met,
The cupboard where the pots of jam are set?
Yes! Housewives, weep! — for them, by fiendish plots
I do confess I stole those sacred pots!
Dreadful! For them climbed chairs, if to my eyes
Discovered hid a plate of strawberries
Kept for ourselves.— The vile Grandfather cries.
"Dear, little, greedy birds of Paradise,

They are for you — but look into the street;
Poor children — one a babe — your eyes will meet.
They're hungry; bring them up and share the prize."

To doff the mask — I hold it prejudice;
I deem those rules stupid mistakes and vain,
That crags from the great eagles would restrain,
Love from white bosoms, and from children joy.
I call it stifling, priggish idiocy.
I laugh when we our manly fury vent,
A child from picking apples to prevent;
When we permit our kings false oaths to plight:
Defend your apples less, and more your right,
Peasant! — When flows the tide of infamy,
When bourgeois shameless, voting "Yes," we see
Basile, a banker — Scapin, a mitred lord;
When, as we move a pawn upon the board,
A bold adventurer stakes a crime on France,
And passionless and dark plays with the chance,
Or of a convict's chain, or Emperor's throne!
When this is suffered, and no fury shown,
And treason reigns, sunk in foul revelry;
Then I for refuge among cradles fly.
I seek the gentle dawn, and more delight
In the pure troops of merry elves and bright,
Doing whate'er they like to pass the time,
Than in a crowd, accepting festive crime,
And Paris soiled by the lower empire —
And in spoilt children, than in rotten sire!

THE POOR CHILDREN

Prenez garde à ce petit être

TAKE heed of this small child of earth;
He is great: he hath in him God most high.
Children before their fleshly birth
Are lights alive in the blue sky.

In our light bitter world of wrong
They come; God gives us them awhile.
His speech is in their stammering tongue,
And his forgiveness is their smile.

Their sweet light rests upon our eyes.
Alas! their right to joy is plain.
If they are hungry, Paradise
Weeps, and, if cold Heaven thrills with pain.

The want that saps their sinless flower
Speaks judgment on sin's ministers.
Man holds an angel in his power.
Ah! deep in Heaven what thunder stirs,

When God seeks out these tender things
Whom in the shadow where we sleep
He sends us clothed about with wings,
And finds them ragged babes that weep!

IN THE MEADOWS

Je me penche attendri

O'ER wood and stream I muse with tenderness,
Of birds and flowers a Grandfather no less.

I pity feel for all the things that are,
And bid the children even roses spare.
Scare neither plant nor animal, I say;
Laugh without frightening, without harming play;
Jeanne and her brother George, pure-browed, bright-
eyed,
Sparkle amid the flowers expanding wide.
Harmless I wander in this Paradise;
I hear them sing, and musing thoughts arise,
In their glad games how little heed they take
Of the sad sound the turning pages make,
Of Fate's mysterious volume.— From the priest
How far they are — how near to Jesus Christ.

THE RISING GENERATION

Que voulez-vous? L'enfant me tient en sa puissance

What should I do? Childhood has hold of me;
I have come to love nothing but innocency;
Men are of brass, of lead; childhood is gold.
I am devoted to Astyanax;
I grumble at Hector; "Art thou well assured
Thou didst thy duty towards Troy?" My heaven
Is a clear blue, that thunders now and then.
Wrath and good nature are spring-tides with me;
I know no bounds, no more when my lips smile
Than when my words are fierce. Starry and re-
mote
The spirit whereof my soul is full. My heart
Checks at no frontier, and I have in it
No barriers against love of little ones,
Rights of the weak and succour that is due
To all who are unhappy. If this be sickness,
Then the Asylum for Incurables

Is the right place for me. I cannot see
Why, coming down from heaven upon mankind,
Rays of the sun should stop half-way. I know
No medium kind of truth. Free I would have
The use of laughter, bare the light o' the star.
I am old; you pass; and, to my joy or sorrow,
Your generation has me instantly
For its adoptive father. Find for me
A thing to do, however radical,
Belonging to my post as ancestor,
And, whether aid or censure, I will do it.
I stood one day upon the winning side;
I gasped for breath; I felt how pitiless
Is victory; I took flight. A reef — a beach
Received me. Death drew near to accost me.
"Exile,"
It said, "all hail!" Thereat one smiled on me,
One that is mighty, one that dreams in me —
My conscience. And from that time forth I loved
Children; not finding aught save infancy
Worthier of note, under God's heaven, than I.
A child, compact of love and simpleness,
Is the sole being in this dark life of ours
That can be little without littleness,
Being without envy. That is why I love
These birdlings.

In my visions, none the less,
I watch these pygmies grow to heroes. France!
I want to see them apt for duty. Grown,
I feel that they become responsible,
I smile no more; and to myself I say —
There is a doughty battle to be fought
Against thrones, scaffolds, palaces and slums,
Sceptres and swords. I am tender to the child,

Harsh to the father. Give me men well made!
Let them bethink them of their native land,
Dragged by the heels, dragged by a fist in the hair,
Around the Vandals' camp. It angers me
When, at Berlin or Rome, the feudal wolf
Revives, affronts the morning sun, reopens
The jaws of its two heads — heads that so oft
Have bitten each other. Worst of griefs, I feel
France growing tragically less. I chide
Whoever has a beard upon his chin:
What, this tall silly-billy is as old
As Danton? This poor creature might be Hoche,
And is Jocrisse! Then dawn abashes me;
My heaven is hid; I hanker for the tomb.
Sadly I remember what our sires have done,
Their ocean that laid siege to promontories,
Their Marseillaise that brought down walls in ruins,
The gates of night unhinged, the hydra slain,
The dragon wounded. I behold their flag
Laurelled with lightnings. Ah, how jovially
They crushed all Europe in that clasp of steel!
Soldiers of Egypt, Valmy, and the Rhine,
Wrestling, avenging, let men imitate them!
I am a sire, I say, whose progeny
Must keep on growing better. I would have
Angels in heaven breed archangels. I,
Gaffer indulgent, but stern ancestor,
As gentle on this side as on that severe,
Would have men wallow in glory limitless,
So it were hallowed — so it saved our land.
I would not have our towns to be one day
What Herculaneums and Pompeiis are;
I do not see why spirits should be depraved;
I do not see why nobody should match
In energy or hope, daring or dying,

The men of Ulm, Jena, and the Pyramids.
What, could brave men beget men fearful? No,
No, you have blood — blood, youngsters, in your veins!
For the old world of disgraces our forbears
Were desperate heroes; in the future, though,
There is yet scope; be as your sires were, giants!
But be a people, not a populace.
So may we wish their outlook back again,
The same freeing of the nations, the same hymn,
Same rendings off of bonds and livery-coats,
And the same fame, safe from remorse and stainless,
For our heirs living as for our fathers dead.

THE GRANDFATHER'S SONG

Dancez les petites filles

Dance, little girls,
All in a ring;
To see you so pretty,
The forest will sing.

Dance, little Queens,
All in a ring;
Loves to Lasses
Sweet kisses will bring.

Dance, little Madcaps,
All in a ring;
The crabbed old mistress
Will grumble and fling.

Dance, little beauties,
All in a ring;

The birds will applaud you
With clapping of wing.

Dance, little Fairies,
All in a ring;
With cornflower garlands
And fair as the spring.

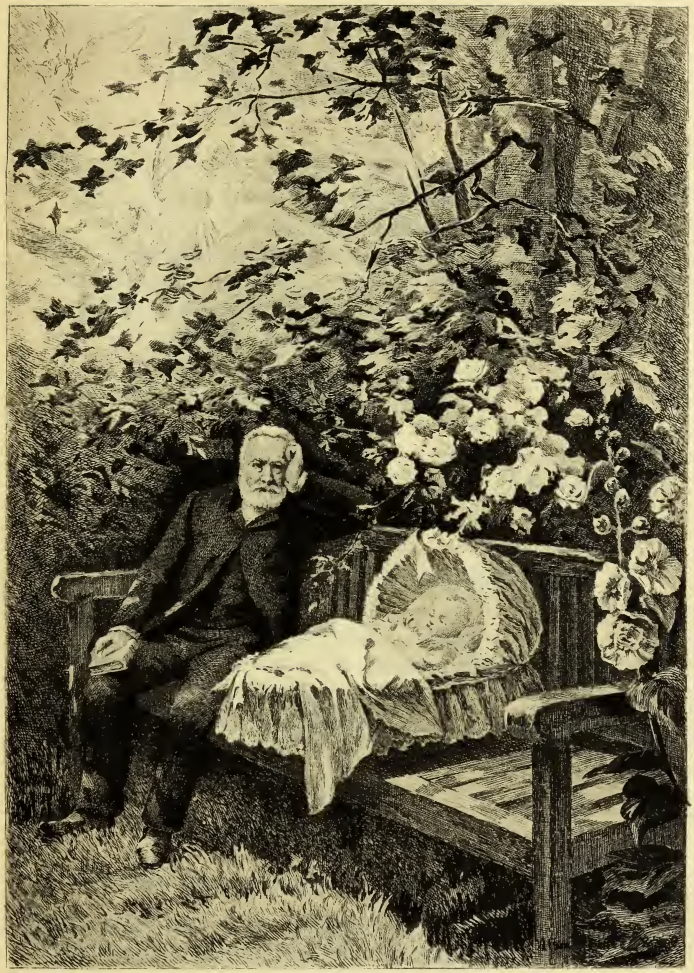
Dance, little women,
All in a ring;
Each Beau to his Lady
Says some pretty thing.

SONG OF OUR FATHERS

Parlons de nos aïeux sous la verte feuillée

Let us tell of our ancestors under the oak —
Our fathers, who triumphed, who threw off the yoke;
Their harness is rusted asunder;
But their memories shed on the twilight of time,
Like soft-welling water-drops, flashes sublime,
As though they had steeped them in thunder.
Strike, boys, strike
Buckler on pike —
Strike!

They shunned the red wine and the pale courtezan.
True children of Brennus, unmoved they could scan,
With the shadow of palaces o'er them,
Bared bosoms — heads severed; the censers, the songs,
The priest and the soldier — the splendour of throngs



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In the king's train passing before them.
Strike, boys, strike
Buckler on pike —
Strike!

They, they were the Titans, the emmets are we;
Their Gaul was the mother of France that should be;
The freedom they nursed, they achieved it.
The mountains remember the promise of day;
The dawn may come late, but it cometh alway;
They only are great who believed it.
Strike, boys, strike
Buckler on pike —
Strike!

Lift up your eyes to the hill-tops of story —
They were there! Lift them up to the summits of glory,
To liberty's cliff-girdled plain;
They were there! To die free was their crown of endeavor;
A reveling life is a creeping life ever;
Climb — climb to those highlands again!
Strike, knights, strike
Buckler on pike —
Strike!

JEANNE ASLEEP

L'oiseau chante; je suis au fond des rêveries

Birds sing, and I am plunged in reveries;
There lies she, rosy 'neath the flowery trees,
Rocked in her cot, as in a Halcyon's nest,
Soft, unperceiving in her tranquil rest,

How sun and shade successive on her fall.
She's tiny, she is supernatural!
Vast loveliness of infant purity!
I muse — she dreams — beneath her brow there lie
Entanglements of visions all serene;
Cloud-women, every one a stately queen;
Angels and lions, with mild kindly air,
And poor good giants, of whom dwarfs take care;
Triumphs of forest flowers, and trophies bright
Of heavenly trees, all full of Fairy light,
A cloud where half disclosed is Paradise —
Such are the sights in childhood's sleep arise.
The baby's cradle is the realm of dreams
And real, each vision which God sends, it deems.
Thence their fresh smile, and their deep peace received.
Soon — one may say — "'Twas false all I believed."

But the good God shall answer from the cloud;
"No!— you dreamed Heaven — Though shadows I've allowed,
Heaven you will have — For the next cradle wait;
The Tomb." 'Tis thus I dream. Sing, birds, elate!—

FRATERNITY

Je rêve l'équité, la vérité profonde

Of real truth and justice are my dreams;
Of love that wills, and of the hope that beams;
Of faith that can move mountains; of man's heart
Enlightened, rather than condemned to smart;
I dream of what is tender, gentle, good,
And all-forgiving. Hence my solitude.

'Tis common for the savageness, that lurks
Of old in man, to justify its works;
As priest or judge, to deem it has a right
To do whate'er seems pleasing in its sight;
And to suppose that putting on a gown
Confers the right to lay its conscience down.
It takes the balance-sheets of heaven, and strikes
Out what offends it, adds whate'er it likes;
For equity of God it substitutes
The laws of man; the charter of the brutes,
Of child, of woman, is erased therefrom;
It falsifies the ciphers, and the sum.
Hence the "man gods"; hence monarchs who are
"suns";
Hence, on our pavements, all that blood that runs;
The persecution, the lament, the rage,
And the grave features of the insulted sage.
Who was the first to cry when Jesus came,
"Away with him"? 'Twas the high priest. O shame!
At all times, and for evermore to stay,
Whatever we may think, whatever say,
The Furies, in religion, are at home;
Megæra is a Catholic of Rome;
Alecto is baptized; the bleeding Nun,
Who to Arbuez sang an antiphon
In his church-service, was Tisiphone;
Louvois was hounded on by such as she,
And such the harpies who with Bossuet's aid
Incited Boufflers to the Dragonnade.

Do not suppose if God himself drew nigh
Man's pristine frenzy would be stayed, would fly
Before the light divine. The purest breeze,
Though from above, it taints with its disease,
The sweetest love-songs with its evil rage.

Progress, the truest, fairest, the most sage
And righteous, for its monstrous track makes way;
It ebbs with nightfall, but returns with day.
Cromwell may smite one tyrant — one survives,
Cromwell himself. The wicked lose their lives,
The wickedness lives on. Dawn cannot clear
The skies of the dark spectre. The austere
And humorous exorcist, mother-wit,
Assails the vampire without mastering it.
A sullen grandam in the best arm-chair,
Ferocity has made our hearts its lair,
And as it ruled the father, rules the son.
A new ideal epoch seemed begun,
Of late, upon this worn-out continent,
A people stood upright in wonderment;
Bastilles were stormed by whirlwinds of July,
And Revolutions on the mountains high
And on the seas — thy daughters, Liberty!
Arose and won a civic victory,
A battle of giants! Nature stood aghast
At that portentous passing of the Past —
Of Lar and Lemur, Chaos and old Night;
When all unheedful of the dawning light
The fiend returned, its trophies to deface,
And Carrier leered in Torquemada's place.
The human hive awakened, buzzing loud,
Emerging from the shadow of the cloud,
Soared in the blue, laboured toward better hours,
Sang, gathered honey from all kinds of flowers;
Hatred the while, the old spirit of the old Cain,
Stood by and marked our paradise with pain,
And that her sway unbroken still might last
Chained the bright future to the grovelling Past;
Or if a link was wanting to the chain
For Père Letellier gave us Père Duchêne;

Till all the damned, with Satan at their head,
Might laugh to see our Eden frustrated.

Yet, heart of mine, to wish that Man should be
Good, great, indulgent, is not lunacy;
No, not to croak the same unvarying ditty
Till thou art hoarse — Have pity — pity — pity!

Thou art not mad in wishing more of white
Even to swans; to howlets, less of night;
Not mad, in sighing over all oppressed;
It is no dream or error, to have guessed
That good is latent with the bad; that none
Were ever born on whom no light hath shone;
And that of those by whom offences came
The lesser part were in themselves to blame.
Man is to evil what the weather-glass
Is to the wind; he marks the storms that pass,
Not adding to them or omitting aught;
And if he sinks or rises, cause and fault
Lie in the air — the dark external power.
Man is the hoisted flag upon a tower;
By every breath that rustles, flickers, glides
And passes, it is moved; and no one chides
The conscious rag that shivers to the gust.
O dust, be merciful to other dust!
O men, my brothers, you are tempest-tossed,
Scattered by whirlwinds, in abysses lost;
Have mercy! Life is brief, and hearts must bleed;
Each to his neighbour worm show grace at need!
Even when I have trespassed, when I slip
And fall, the darkness having made me trip,
For what the night, the winter drave me to,
To be absolved — loved — pitied is my due.

There was a vision passed before my eyes;
It seemed a woman 'lighting from the skies;
Wings were upon her shoulders, sweetness lay
Between her parted lips, and in her eyes the day.
For weary travellers journeying abroad
She pointed in the darkness to one road,
Seeming to say —'Tis difficult to find.
Her aspect was benign to all mankind;
Bright was she and mild; fierce creatures following
Behind her trooped with rue, kissing her wing,
Lions and tigers pardoned for their crimes,
Nimrod redeemed, Nero in tears; at times
For very goodness she was held absurd;
And falling on my knees, without one word
I worshipped her, thinking her function plain.
But she — before an angel 'tis in vain
That man is silent — in my bosom read:
"Not Pity — Justice is my name," she said.

LES QUATRE VENTS DE L'ESPRIT

1881

LES QUATRE VENTS DE L'ESPRIT

PROSE POETRY

Prends garde à Marchangy. La prose poétique

'Ware Marchangy! Prose poetry is a quag
Where Pegasus becomes a foundered nag.
'Tis true, as fully as to verse, to prose
Belong the rhythm divine, the rounded close;
So but the tunes be latent, rhythms cut short,
Not aping metre, in severer sort.
Prose rides in vain on irritating springs;
Verse up to heaven spontaneous plies its wings;
Soars, for 'tis verse; somewhat, I know not what,
Frail but undying, that sings and wearies not;
Wild, with a streak of lightning in its eyes,
It mounts, it hovers, mingling in the skies
With those far gleams that warm the morning air.
Prose, though it waltz from hence to the Great Bear,
Is prose and nothing more — *sermo pedestris:*
You aim at Ariel, and you are — Vestris.

PRETTY WOMEN

On leur fait des sonnets, passables quelquefois

We write them sonnets, sometimes pretty good;
  We kiss the hands they deign to extend to us;
We follow them to church, or to the wood;
  We play the Orlando, play the Protëus;

Balls are their triumphs, and we court their choice;
They laugh, they chat, they dance; and you may hear
Amid the dancing, o'er the hautboys clear,
These beauties lisp in their most tender voice —

"We want more jails: the guillotine is right;
And fewer schools; you can have too much light:

War is a blessing; force is everything;
If Paris stirs, you must have forts, with guns."

And every word these doves are uttering
Might move a shudder in dead skeletons.

THE STAIR

Je suis fait d'ombre et de marbre

Of the marble and the shade
Cast by midnight I was made;
In the gloom where tree-roots darken
Am I planted, and I hearken
Deep in earth, and from thereunder
Cry aloud, and bid the thunder
"Wait: be still, and mark."

I the Poet have been made
Out of marble and deep shade
A mysterious winding Stair
From the depths to upper air.
On my landings, as they rise
Flight by flight, the restless eyes
Open, of the dark.

There shall gleam upon your nights
Corpse-candles for banquet-lights.
Pass, ye revellers of a day!
Pass, respect this virgin way:
Steps of mine were no-wise meet
Made for Pleasure's wingèd feet —
Naked feet of Love.

At my depth and at my height
All things shiver with affright;
Even spectres wilt with dread:
From the region of the dead
I uprise, and build a way
To that door, where-through the ray
Passes, far above.

Laughter, lights, and jollity —
Those within are full of glee.
In their blood-flecked diadem
All observe and worship them;
Woman freelier stales her charms
Of bared bust and sleeveless arms,
If they wear a crown.

Let the bolt, the padlock, be;
Here the stairway stands of me.
Vengeance waits the hour to strike;
Day shall dawn for all alike;
One, whene'er these shadows end
By my ladder shall ascend —
One thereby come down.

TO THE CLOUDS AND THE BIRDS

O verges du zénith, nuées

Clouds, heaven's virgins fair and sweet,
And birds! soft children of the skies.
Ye purities; the dawn doth greet,
Gazed on by Ocean's azure eyes.

Ye by Eve first of all things hight,
Ye for whom God, who rules on high,
Created that abyss called light,
And made those wings called liberty.

Ye, from the gulf in which we are,
Whom in the vast vague sky we see;
Ye, who for Romes little care,
And deem that anthills nobler be!

Ye, whom the dew with mist invests,
And feeds and forms with tears and showers;
Ye birds who spring from hidden nests,
Ye clouds that rise up from the flowers.

Speak! ye from day who spring elate,
Through an unbounded course to fly,
Whom doth the ether penetrate
With glory and serenity.

Ye who see mountains bleak and bold,
And morning fresh, and night's dark face;
Who all the earth and seas behold —
Free wanderers of the azure space;

Say what doth the calm night proclaim
What think th' inhabitants of light,
Of all this sordid human shame
That crawls beneath the Infinite.

THE POOL

La calomnie immonde et qu'on jette en courant

Foul calumnies, which those who stone us throw
At random, as they pass,
Sink without muddying its transparent flow
In the soul's pool of glass.

Deep in the ooze, imbedded stagnantly,
Far from the day they hide;
While love and hope, candour and charity
Float buoyant on the tide.

And smiling faith, and dreaming quietness,
And goodness frank and kind
Come back to dip their wings of white no less
Within the unruffled mind.

The passers' insults in the purest mere —
On the most reverend head —
Fall; but the swans swim on the surface, clear
Above the miry bed.

AN OLD-TIME LAY

Quelqu'un connaît-il ma cachette?

Does any one know my bower, say?
'Tis a calm shelter, where the sun

Redeemeth, one bright springtide day,
The wrong six wintry months have done.

Clear limpid waters wander there;
Among tall reeds the lily floats;
While lovers' murmurs in warm air
Are mingled with the birds' blithe notes.

There, 'mong the flowers, are scattered groups;
As in a dream one walks, one rests:
Here, sparkling song in the depth of cups,
Dim silence there in the depth of nests.

The charm of this dim solitude,
The grace of that soft, sunny height,
Seems with the tear of Greuze bedewed,
With gentle Watteau's smile made bright.

Through mist doth far-off Paris lower;
There, Regnier's bower of wine and glee
Is worth not, here, one dreamful hour
'Neath rosy lamps of a chestnut tree.

Ye know not dreamland's sweetest things
Till in cool cavern you repose —
Lo! waking, with weird murmurings
They're lost 'mong rustling forest-boughs.

Art proud? The fault doth me surpass.
Ambitious? How can that be so,
Since one can dream among the grass
Beneath the mystic moon's soft glow!

The flowers' bright language amorous
Art deaf to ev'n in rosy May?

Listen! It sweetly biddeth us
In our dull souls let blossom day.

While glistening robes, breasts bright as lilies,
Warm cooings, tender like a dove,
Of Galatea and blithesome Phyllis
Counsel the woodways, laughter, love.

THE FLOWER OF DEATH

La vision de la vie

The vision of humankind,
A phantom chased by the wind,
Unheeded passes me by.
Earth is a ruinous heap.
The hours' encircling sweep —
What should it signify?

What's gold of harvest, to me?
What, the star from the sea,
Or morn that gilds heaven's dome?
What, the tuft on the spray,
Or drift-cloud white or grey?
These are not my home.

I regard other sights,
New blossoms, other lights,
The other aspect of doom,
And the dark garden of Death
Which Night o'ershadoweth,
And Death's wan flower in bloom.

For whom is't that it blows,
That pale perennial rose?
Sadly its buds expand.

It sends forth on the air
A fragrance balmy and rare
  Into a silent land.

Behind a death-charged mist
The poison-petals are kissed
  By a strange halo-light.
Like to a face in sweat
The woeful plant is wet,
  Livid, stricken with blight.

By its rays, that eclipse
This earth's apocalypse,
  That which is real I scan.
Flesh fails; life is a lie.
Things spiritual the mind's eye
  Sees better, freed from the man.

NEAR AVRANCHES

La nuit morne tombait sur la morne étendue

On ocean mournful, vast, fell the vast mournful night.

The darkling wind awoke, and urged to hurried flight,
Athwart the granite crags, above the granite crests,
Some sails unto their haven, some birds unto their nests.

Sad unto death, I gazed on all the world around.
Oh! how yon sea is vast, and the soul of man profound!

Afar St. Michael towered, the wan salt waves amid,
Huge Cheops of the west, the ocean-pyramid.

On Egypt, home of fathomless mysteries, did I brood,
Its sandy desert's grand eternal solitude,
All-darkling camp of kings ne'er stirred by battle-breath,
Planted for aye i' the sombre stricken field of death.

Alas! In even these spots where widest-winged doth rove
God's breath, supreme in wrath, omnipotent in love,
To erect beneath high heaven what hath been man's sole care?—
Lo, here a prison frowns, and there a sepulchre.

MY HAPPIEST DREAM

J'aime à me figurer, de longs voiles couvertes

I LOVE to watch in fancy, to some soft dreamy strain,
A choir of lovely virgins issuing angel-calm,
Veiled all in white, at even, from some old shadowy fane;
In hand — a palm!

A dream which in my darkest hours doth aye beguile
Is this: a group of children, ere they seek repose,
Merrily dancing; on each rosebud mouth a smile,
Each brow — a rose!

Haply a dream yet sweeter, that yields yet more delight,
Is of a radiant girl, who, betwixt joy and fear,

Dreameth of Love, not knowing, beneath God's stars love-bright;
In eye — a tear!

Another vision which doth lend my sorrow ease:
Lo, Marguerite and Jeanne, like birds at evening
Flitting across the lawn, across the shadowy leas;
Each foot — a wing!

But of all dreams whereon I gaze with pensive eyes,
This to my poet-soul most pleasure doth afford:
A tyrant stretched beneath God's awful starlit skies;
In heart — a sword!

A sword; but never a dagger! Poet, thy right
Is, 'neath the broad blue sky, a fair free fight,
Where, face to face, and foot to foot, and breast
To breast, thou stand'st — and leav'st to God the rest.
Thou Justice' champion (*he,* the chos'n of hell!)
In the sun's eye cross falchions, and smite well;
Thy sword-clash ringing true as even thy song.
So, if yet once again Right fall 'neath Wrong,
Right's warrior, mingling with death's shadowy bands,
Find Bayard and the Cid with outstretched hands.

ON HEARING THE PRINCESS ROYAL[1] SING

Dans ta haute demeure

In thine abode so high
Where yet one scarce can breathe,
Dear child, most tenderly
A soft song thou dost wreathe.

[1] Marie, daughter of King Louis Philippe, afterwards Princess of Würtemburg.

Thou singest, little girl —
  Thy sire, the King is he:
Around thee glories whirl,
  But all things sigh in thee.

Thy thought may seek not wings
  Of speech; dear love's forbidden;
Thy smiles, those heavenly things,
  Being faintly born, are chidden.

Thou feel'st, poor little Bride,
  A hand unknown and chill
Clasp thine from out the wide
  Deep shade so deathly still.

Thy sad heart, wingless, weak,
  Is sunk in this black shade
So deep, thy small hands seek,
  Vainly, the pulse God made.

Thou art yet but highness, thou
  That shalt be majesty:
Though still on thy fair brow
  Some faint dawn-flush may be,

Child, unto armies dear,
  Even now we mark heaven's light
Dimmed with the fume and fear
  And glory of battle-might.

Thy godfather is he,
  Earth's Pope,— he hails thee, child!
Passing, armed men you see
  Like unarmed women, mild.

As saint all worship thee;
  Thyself even hast the strong
Thrill of divinity
  Mingled with thy small song.

Each grand old warrior
  Guards thee, submissive, proud;
Mute thunders at thy door
  Sleep, that shall wake most loud.

Around thee foams the wild
  Bright sea, the lot of kings.
Happier wert thou, my child,
  I' the woods a bird that sings!

TWILIGHT

Un hymne harmonieux

With a vague dreamful hymn the aspen leaves are stirred;
Belated travellers, to walk alone afeard,
Lift voices through the twilight, onward hastening.
  O suffer each timid bird
    Sing!

The weary mariners are cradled on the main;
Blue waves, wherewith the noontide mingles hot gold rain,
Find ease, for the sun is set, and almost cease to weep.
  O suffer all sorrow, all pain
    Sleep!

Ah! though to-day be dark, one dreams a bright to-
morrow;
Dim tearful eyes toward heaven are raised some blue
to borrow;
Godward our hope is winged, God speeds it on the
way.
O suffer all pain, all sorrow
Pray!

'Tis for a purer air that here one fails for breath;
All that above would soar must first be laid beneath;
In earth's last silence all must seek heaven's harmony.
O suffer all fain of death
Die!

PEPITA

Enfance! Madrid! campagne

Oh to be a child again!
To behold Madrid — the Prado —
And in sun the face of Spain,
And thine, Pepita, in shadow!

I was eight years old, and she
Twice my age. To be her king,
As she would call me, fluttered me —
Look, the May is blossoming!

She admired an officer.
Later on it struck my blindness
Why, while loving him, the fair
To myself alone showed kindness.

With my flame she lit the pile
  Destined to consume another;
Would from him withhold a smile;
  Me with a caress would smother.—

And the well-invested kiss,
  Which appeared a free gift to me,
Roused the young man's jealousies,
  And was potent to undo me.

With fists clenched he strode astride;
  I, triumphant o'er my neighbour,
Wished I had a horse to ride —
  Dreamt of brandishing a sabre.

Fanning, thus, with point of wing
  In my breast the new-born fancies,
With an air of wondering
  At the effect of her soft glances,

In unconscious womanhood
  Sporting, as she vowed to have me,
She dispelled my cloudy mood
  With the kiss her bounty gave me.

Well or ill, at every age,
  Whether giddier or colder,
We keep learning something sage
  From a child a few years older.

AN OLD-TIME LAY

Jamais elle ne raille

NEVER sigh or tear
Irks this happy fay;
But she laugheth aye.—
There are wisps of straw, while mossy twigs are here:
Reed warbler, breeze-blest,
Build on the waves thy nest.

Beneath beams most fair
Of thine eyes so bright
Passing, what delight!—
Here are mossy twigs, while wisps of straw are there:
Swallow sweet, sun-blest,
Build 'neath mine eaves thy nest.

May drinks April's tear,
While her azure eyes
Wake birds' blithest cries.—
Here is *her* sweet smile, her blush yet sweeter, here —
Happy Love, thus blest,
Build in my heart thy nest!

THE CHOICE

Je disais;— Dieu qu'aucun suppliant n'importune

I USED to pray "Thou whom prayers weary not,
When in Thy wisdom Thou would'st try my heart,
Suffer my will to choose, for mine own part,
The one or other lot.

"God of both reed and cedar, leave to me
Bare independence, wealthy servitude;
Between the gilded cage and the green wood
Let the bird's choice be free."

Free have I lived, and I am near my night;
Hard exile have I chosen; my green home
Darkens; but I behold, beyond the gloom,
The soul's stars waxing bright.

JERSEY

Jersey dort dans les flots

JERSEY, lulled by the waves' eternal chime,
Sleeps; in her smallness being twice sublime;
A rocky mountain,— born amid blue sea.
Old England northward, southward Normandy,
Our sweet she is, and in her summer-trance
Hath the bright smiles, and oft the tears, of France.

For the third time now her flowers and fruits I've seen.
O land of Exile, little island queen,
Be blest of me as by thy billows blest!
This small bright nook where the tired soul finds rest,
If 'twere my country, were my haven of life.
Here, as some mariner from sea-stormy strife
Rescued, I'd dwell, and suffer with delight
The sun shine all my darkling soul snow-white
Like yonder linen bleaching on the grass.

Musing profoundly seems each rocky mass;
Within whose hollow caverns waves forever
Gurgle and sob. When evening falleth, shiver

The trees, weird sibyls with the wind for wail;
While the huge cromlech, like a spectre pale,
Towers on the hill, till 'neath the wan moon-ray
It turns to Moloch grinning o'er his prey.

Along the beach, when blow the strong west-winds,
In every craggy corner where one finds
Frail fisher-huts, across the thatch that slopes
Seaward, are stretched stone-weighted briny ropes,
Lest by the blast the roof be torn away.
With bosom bare, some old-world ocean-lay
Each mother to her sailor babe doth drawl,
What time from out the surf a boat they haul;—
While laugh the meadows.

Hail, O sacred Isle,
That brightliest to heaven's rosiest dawn dost smile!
Hail beacons, stars by fisher-folk best blest!
Old mossy church-towers where blithe swallows nest!
Poor altars rudely carved of fishermen!
Elm-shadowed roads where creaks the heavy wain;
Gardens bright-flushed with flowers of every dye;
Streams with blue sea for goal, dreams with blue sky,—
All hail!

On the horizon wings snow-white
Of vessels; nearer shore the sea-mews' flight,—
Old Ocean's fearless wave-delighting flock!
Lo, Venus smiling on each storm-scarred rock,
What time,— to song of birds and billows born,—
She gives to heaven the rosy-dimpled Morn.

O heather on the hills! foam on the waves!
Cybele's crumbling palace ocean laves!

Rough mountain soothed by ocean melodies!
Lowing of kine! Sweet slumber beneath trees!

The islands seems immersed in voiceless prayer,
Not to be turned therefrom, though ocean, air,
Around her blend their vast defiant chaunts.
The cloud weeps, passing; lo, the rock that vaunts
Upon its spur how many a brave ship riven,
Keeps on its crest for the bird a little dew of heaven!

TO MY DAUGHTER ADÈLE

Tout enfant, tu dormais près de moi

NEAR me you slept, a fresh and rosy child,
Cradled, the infant Jesus thus had smiled.
So calm, so soft your sleep of purity,
You could not hear the birds sing in the shade,
And I inhaled all the sad sweetness made
By the mysterious sky.

I heard the angels round your pillow meet;
And as I watched your slumbers, on your sheet
Jasmine and pinks I strewed silent and still.
Marking your lids fast closed in sleep, I prayed,
And my eyes filled with tears, while I portrayed,
What might the future fill.

My turn will come for sleeping, and my bed
Of darkness formed will be so drear and dread,
That song of birds my ears shall waken not;
In that bleak night, you will pour, O my Dove!
The prayers, the tears, the flowers my grave above,
Which I poured o'er your cot.

SINCE SILENTLY ARE OPED

Puisque là-bas s'entr'ouvre une porte vermeille

Since silently are oped the pearl gates of the skies;
Since, yonder, dawn awakes once more the sea and land,
Like to a faithful servant, aye the first to arise
And through the house, yet slumbering, move, bright lamp in hand;

Since on the sleepless fount the dawn-gleams wax and wane,
Since from the shuddering woods dark dreams of night get free,
Urged by the pure calm glance of heaven which the dim plain
Regards full drowsily;

Since on the breathless hills the strong sweet day is born,
I wander through the meadows sad and fresh and sweet;
Hoping perchance to find a sweeter, stronger morn
For a yet darker night which nought else may defeat.

What lot is man's! This life is't but some monstrous freak?
Ah me! beyond the dawn broods there a brighter Light?
All trembles. Nature vast, to me wouldst thou now speak
In the soul's awful night?

ON THE CLIFFS

Tu souris dans l'invisible

O SWEET Spirit! you smile, I ween,
Though you are unfelt, unseen;
I sad and lone
Feel your garment floating nigh,
While the dark waves hurry by,
And sob and moan.

In night's solitary hours,
Song my wounded heart outpours,
The rocks among;
And the air around me brings
Thrillings of your angel wings
To join my song.

Of poor neighbouring folk my dreams —
Born beneath those roofs, where gleams
The wakeful light —
Grizzled beard, or golden hair,
What do the deep waters care
In stormy night?

Those by others lost I weep,
All doth one same sorrow steep —
The same blow shocks.
Here upon this iron coast
All in one same vessel lost —
On the same rocks.

Captains stout, and sea boys small,
Whom did such dear voices call,
And such heart prayer.

They are mixed in ocean's space;
Silver fish each other chase
Amid their hair.

'Neath the dark waves, without slumber,
See them in the deep ooze slumber,
Marred by its stain;
Wide their mouths are — dreadful sight,
As if gaping with affright,
Death's draught they drain.

Pallid wandering ghosts they be,
Whom their cottage ne'er shall see,
Nor home receive;
Woods, fresh green, of beech or oak,
Meadow, flower, their chimney smoke,
At golden eve.

In their eyes the senseless wave,
Which doth ever flee and rave,
While winds pursue,
Doth, sad change, the land replace,
Paths their steps shall ne'er retrace,
Nor eyes shall view.

Ghosts and corpses, wan and worn,
These from port to port are borne
By ebb and flow.
Dawn they never more shall greet,
Nor shall eve its music sweet
On them bestow.

Yet our musing fancy rests
'Mid these rocks upon those guests,
Of th' unknown bourne!

Through the shivering sea depths gone,
To that shadow land whence none
Hither return.

'Twas the husband, 'twas the child,
Called their names with voices wild,
And boding vows,
When at eve the beacon's glare,
Or the morning torches' flare
Alarm arouse.

One cries —"Soon I hope shall all
Safe return — James, Peter, Hal,
Louis and John,
August next, when grapes are black;"
But the night wind murmurs back —
"Vanished and gone!"

Says another—"'Mid the storms,
Closely watch, you'll see the forms
Of the drowned dead.
When the eve falls then they come,
Every billow is a tomb,
Whence comes a head."

'Tis in this unbridled main
Souls are borne to heaven again,
Heaven's birds of bliss.
Every billow is a tomb,
O my dove! still every grave
A cradle is.

IN VAIN I SEARCH LIKE ONE DISTRAUGHT

J'ai beau comme un imbécile

In vain I search like one distraught,
My house from floor to floor,
Till I am by the neighbours thought
As one whose mind gives o'er.

Vain search, for she is dead, is dead,
She will return no more;
Alas! for ever lost and fled,
And open still the door.

I start when rings the bell — I own
I hope to find her near.
Glad Autumn days, where are you gone,
O God! when she was here.

That soul has ta'en its upward flight,
I still below must keep;
To stars that glitter in the night
I stretch my arms and weep.

Pressed 'gainst the window, I repass
In dreams the days of yore:
All lost! — that good sweet heart, alas
Which sang — I have no more.

LIGHT ON THE HORIZON

Je songe, un clair rayon luit sur le flot sonore

I dream; a sunbeam steals across the wave;
The beacon, whispering "Dawn!" his torch outblows.

Fain is my soul to know what no one knows,
To see the dawn that breaketh from the grave.

At God's desire doth the glad spirit flit
Far from the icy corpse its earthly home?
What is the ray that flickers o'er the tomb,—
Yon star that smiles from the dumb infinite?

Or in death's shadow living shall we lie,
Striving on earth's loved living ones to call?
Each piercing shriek through the grave's sombre wall
Sounds but a faint vague sigh.

As birds of passage, swallows fleet and free,
Shall man ply wing toward some clear azure goal?
Ah! like as little birds shall be the soul,
Passing death o'er even as they pass the sea?

All speaks, all stirs. To its depths the wood doth cower;
The ox resumes his yoke, the soul its sorrow;
O'er hill and wave smiles blue and cold the morrow,
Blinding the star, and bidding bloom the flower.

This life, with all its wealth of night and day,
Is't worth one wandering cloud in yonder skies?
O birds, that from black boughs pipe melodies,
With me what would your lay?

These darkling dreams with darkness should take flight,
Surely! Behold the plougher tills the land,
The fisher drags full nets o'er briny strand;
While vainly still I dredge the vast void night.

God, whom we question, time it is to cease.
Our dreams, our doubts, our strifes, are nought to Thee.
The abyss is soundless; yet Thy mystery,
If man were fain, would let him live in peace.

The mariner, whose barque is on the wing,
Weighing the anchor, pipes a cheery tune;
Old ocean lets he growl, while growling ocean's boon
Suffers the sailor sing.

SONG OF EXILE

Proscrit, regarde les roses

Exile, mark the budded roses.
Morn, that wept and went away,
Left them blown, to gladden May.
Exile, see, the bloom uncloses.

—— O, I dream
Of the flowers I sowed one day.
Out of France it does not seem
That May is May.

Exile, mark the graves around.
With the kisses of her doves
May, that smiles upon their loves,
Wakes to life each grass-grown mound.

—— But I dream
Of loved eyes I closed one day.
Far from France, I cannot deem
That May is May.

Exile, mark the sprouting boughs,
Boughs wherein are hid the nests
Filled by May with lint-white crests
And innumerable vows.

——I am dreaming
Of old love-nests far away.
Without France there is no seeming
Of May in May.

WEEPS THE EARTH IN WINTER'S DAY

En hiver la terre pleure

Weeps the earth in winter's day,
Cold the sun, and weak and dreary;
Comes full late, soon goes away,
Of his visit sick and weary.

Grace is from their idyls flown.
Ah! to love!— Sun — let us try!—
"Earth, where, are your roses gone?"—
"Where your rays, star of the sky?"

Some excuse he makes for flight —
Wind or clouds — it rains, it snows;
"See, my dear!" he cries, "'tis night!"
Which he makes as off he goes.

Like a lover, who each day
From his heart the fetters breaks,
And not knowing what to say,
Hastes, and off himself betakes.

IT IS A LITTLE LATE TO SMILE SO BRIGHT

Il est un peu tard pour faire la belle

It is a little late to smile so bright,
Queen Marguerite; wait in thy field awhile,
And the green grass with hoar frost shall be white.
— Pilgrim, cold winter comes,— still must I smile.

It is a little late to smile so bright,
Sweet Star of Eve; wait in thy heaven awhile,
Soon will all rosy rays be lost to sight.
— Pilgrim, night comes,— still brightlier see me smile!

It is a little late to smile so bright,
Proud Soul of mine; wait in thy woe awhile,
And one shall stay thy strong wings' heavenward flight.
— Pilgrim, Death comes,— forever shall I smile.

EXILE

Si je pouvais voir, ô patrie

If I might, O! my native land,
Thy almond groves and lilies see,
And tread upon thy flowery strand —
Ah me!

If I might — but, O father mine,
And mother, it can never be —
Pillowed upon your grave recline —
Ah me!

If in your cold constraining bier,
I could speak to you noiselessly;
Abel, Eugene, my brothers dear —
Ah me!

If I was able; O my dove!
And thou, her mother — quick to flee;
To kneel, to fall your graves above —
Ah me!

Oh! towards that star which lonely is,
How would I stretch — your devotee —
My arms;— and how the ground would bless —
Ah me!

Far from you dear ones! when I weep,
I hear the roaring of the sea;
Fain would I go, but here must keep —
Ah me!

Yet if dark Fate, which clouds enclose,
Watching my steps fall wearily,
Deems the old Pilgrim spent, it knows
Not me!

THE TWO SERAPHIM

Le sommet est désert, noir, lugubre inclément

A BARREN peak, inclement, petrified,
By precipices fenced on every side;
The region landscape one vast solitude;
Eternal winters o'er the summit brood,
And frequent prints of naked feet are seen,
Marking where steps before mine own have been

Fetters and gyves lie round, a grisly sight.
I stood beneath, and gazed upon the height.
Two Beings passed me as I waited there;
And their eyes seemed to sparkle, as they were
Stars, that had veiled their splendours from the view,
Serving for lamps to that mysterious Two.
One was austere, the other mild of mood;
They walked together in the self-same road,
Low murmuring, this "Believe," and that "Reflect";
And each one's forehead with a scroll was decked —
"Conscience," and "Truth." I marvelled at the pair,
Stirred to my soul to witness them so fair.
Then these two birds, the eagle and the swan,
Signed to me to arise, and clamber on.
I followed them. They were my guard and guide,
And left me on that peak, with no man there beside.

THE REFUGEE'S HAVEN

Vous voilà dans la froide Angleterre

You may doubt I find comfort in England.
But, there, 'tis a refuge from dangers!
Where a Cromwell dictated to Milton,
Republicans ne'er can be strangers!

THE EDDY

Un tourbillon d'écume au centre de la baie

A SWIRL of froth amid the bay,
Foamed from the gulfs below,
Makes ocean's self appear more gay
That rocks it to and fro;
An alabaster basin wide,
And bordered by an ebon tide.

What is it, God, Thou shap'st within
That snow-charged urn, so white?
What pourest Thou at dawn therein?
What issues thence at night?
Seas batter it with surf in vain,
Tempests with thunder, clouds with rain.

Unharmed by soilure of the deeps,
By thunders of the gale,
For evermore the eddy keeps,
Shunned by each passing sail,
Its place unmoved, its whiteness strange
In the abyss where all things change.

'Tis there that little children lave
Their winglets after death,
At Christmas, in the hallowed wave,
From taint of mortal breath;
And thence, so fishers say, they fly
To live as angels in the sky.

For me, I deem that God has planned
That chalice, fraught with light

In spite of over-shadowing strand,
In whelming seas' despite,
As emblem of a soul at rest,
Mid passion's storms, on nature's breast.

A WALK AMONG THE ROCKS

Le soleil déclinait

THE Sun declined, eve quickly to pursue,
Made brown th' horizon: on a stone to rest
An old man, whose remaining days are few,
Sat musingly, his eyes towards the west.

An aged man, a shepherd, mountain bred,
Who erst young, poor, of free and happy mood,
At eve, when shades were o'er the mountain spread,
His flute made merry music through the wood.

Now rich and old, the past his spirit fills,
Laborious chief of a large family;
The while his flocks are gathered from the hills,
Earth he forgets, and looks but on the sky.

The day that ends is worth the opening days,
The old man mused beneath heaven's azure copes;
The boundless ocean stretched beneath his gaze,
As at the gate of death the good man's hopes.

O solemn scene! the sea that ever threats,
Rocks, winds that silent now, restrain their cries,
The old man looking at the sun that sets,
And the sun looking on the man who dies.

WALK ON THE ROCKS

Dieu! que les monts sont beaux

LORD! How sublime the hills with golden stains,
How full the seas of grace, the skies of light;
I care not what of my short life remains,
I reach the Eternal and the Infinite!

Tempests and passions, from my soul away!
Ne'er yet did God thus in my heart abide;
The sun looks on me with bright western ray,
The sea speaks to me — I feel sanctified!

Blest be alike who love me and who hate;
Wisdom our spirits doth to love exhort;
Fool fame to seek or mysteries debate;
I nothing do but love; my time is short.

The stars rise from the waves, the sun declines,
And at my feet resounding billows fall;
The sinking sun in all his splendour shines —
Oh, God! how great the soul, and man how small!

All earthly things, fire, air, the ocean's might,
Of the Most Holy's name but half have heard;
They scatter words, which I alone unite;
Each says one part, but I the total word.

Abyss, my voice like yours to heaven ascends;
Ocean, I dream; mountains, I pray with you!
Nature is incense pure that never ends;
The censer I, intelligent and true.

CONSCIENCE

Oh! qoique je sois, sur la grève

Although upon the shore I seem
A flake of foam in passing flight;
Although my life is but a dream,
Though I am only dust and night;

Though I am but a lump of clay,
A worm 'mid other human worms,
Crushed 'neath the wheel which speeds away,
The wheel which man "To-morrow" terms;

Though beneath Evil's fangs I lie;
Though I am scorned, and weak, and bare;
Though I am made of misery,
And you of heavenly azure are; —

Dauntless in right you still confide,
Immovable in trust and faith;
Conscience! my sacred help and guide,
You go before me e'en to Death!

Ever prepared, you march before;
You lead, I follow your command;
Your face, Fate's veil is gathered o'er —
The lamp of God is in your hand.

You say, "Your cross you must abide;
Rise up! Here is no resting-place."
You say, "Your soul here you must hide";
You say, "Step in the paths I trace."

You prefer life with sorrows steep,
Mourning and gloom the friend we own;

You smile when I am forced to weep,
You sing when I am forced to groan.

Lit by your torch, with rapture rife,
I step by step, serene and brave,
Through all the miseries of life,
Pass downward to the silent grave.

ONLY A DOG

Un groupe tout à l'heure était là grève

Just now a little group stood on the shore,
Keenly some prostrate object gazing o'er.
"'Tis but a dying dog," the children cry,
And at their feet I saw an old dog lie.
"It has been so three days," the women said;
"Foam from the shore, waves dashing o'er its head:
We vainly called it; it seemed deaf." "Let be!"
An old tar said; "its master's out at sea."
A pilot, from his window looking on,
Said, "The dog pines because its master's gone.
Look! here his boat comes in; but ere it reach
This dog, it will be dead upon the beach."
I stopt and stood beside the wretched beast,
Which stirred nor head nor body in the least.
Its eyes were closed, you could not think it lived.
Its master, as the evening fell, arrived,
Himself now old, but fast as age may go
He sped, and the dog's name he murmured low.
Opening its eyes, which death was clouding o'er,
The dog looked on its master's face once more.
For the last time it wagged its poor old tail;
Then died.—'Neath eve's blue vault, serene and pale,
Like from a cavern a torch, Venus shone.
"Whence is the star?" I said; "the dog, where gone?"

TOUTE LA LYRE

1888

TOUTE LA LYRE

TALAVERA

A Story of my Father's telling.

C'est à Talaveyra de la Reine, en Espagne

At Talavera in the west of Spain,
The English, towards the close of the campaign
Formed on an ancient castle, occupied
One day the southern, we the northern side.
There were two slopes enclosing a ravine;
The fight had raged since morning; smoke between,
In monstrous patches, such as mask a fray,
Tarnished the sun's light and defaced the day;
And he, the orb that gilds those dawns of his —
Old, yet young always, as old Homer is —
He, the same sun Achilles saw of yore,
Was taking vengeance; he began to pour
On us who fought, made deaf by the loud thuds
Of the mad cannonade, the blinding floods
Of his far-spreading beams, dazzling the view;
Sultry, supreme, his lurid radiance threw
Across our human thunders heaven's vast light,
Scorching us up with a malignant blight.

King Charles the Fourth — "Don Carlos" — and
Godoy
His minister, designing our annoy,

Had brought the English army on our backs;
Who, being unfitted for these mountain-tracks,
Were parched no less than we. 'Twas cruel work.
There was no verdure, save where seemed to lurk
At bottom of the hollow a thin screen
Of the Aleppo pine; and there-between
A water-thread was hardly seen to glide,
And the trees bordered either valley-side —
As an eye's lashes mark out lid from lid —
Shading small rills by their own pebbles hid.
We, like seed scattered in the teeth of storms,
French upon English, flung ourselves in swarms.
The grape-shot rained; we trampled under foot
Morsels of limbs — heads — bodies, like red fruit;
While over piles of carnage blazed the sun.
Sabre and musket, bayonet and gun —
We took them as they came; 'twas natural;
But torrid heat to top them — that passed all!
We were athirst. Iron and lead mean death,
But thirst means hell. Thirst, sweat, the sky's hot
breath —
'Twas madness! Yet we never ceased to kill,
Fagging at slaughter with a right good will;
The slain, already stiff and turned to stone,
Lay interspersed with men who held their own.

Suddenly I perceived the water-thread!
A Spaniard saw, and cried, "The devil is dead!"
A Scot bestrode it, face to face with me;
A Frenchman followed us — then two — then three;
We left off fight; we dropped upon our knees,
Game to begin afresh, whene'er you please;
The wounded, limping, threw themselves upon it,
Pledging each other in a blood-stained bonnet;

"Here's to your health," quoth I; "and here's to yours!"
And we hob-nobbed, like New-Year's visitors.

Back to the fight! Now, no more time for drinking!
War to the knife!

And I remember thinking —
"You monarchs, you rash folk who govern others —
You make men enemies, whom God made brothers."

THE MARABOUT PROPHET

Fuyez au mont inabordable!

Flee to the clefts of earth! to the steep-fenced hill-top flee!
A perilous nation comes from the coasts of the northern sea.

They shall have good captains: they shall march across the plain.
Their shipmen shall be good: they shall pass over the main.

They shall come with banners: they shall come with chariots, and guns;
The hoofs of their horsemen shall rage like the blast of the terrible ones.

They shall cry as an eagle freed, "Behold us at the last!
Your men shall die by the sword: your women shall die by fast."

Ye shall see them in the night-time by the glow they
shed, and the gleam;
Like the noise of the sea-waves shall the sound of
their coming seem.

They shall have as it were wings: they shall fly in
the midnight heaven,
In number more than the sparks of a thatch that
burns at even.

They shall have hate in their hearts, and a two-edged
sword in their hands.
O walk not in your ways! O go not forth on your
lands!

For nought in our fathers' fields shall be heard, but
the trumpet's bray,
And nought shall be seen but spears, their spears in
battle array.

They shall come with shouting and laughter; with
countless wheels, and with smoke.
A mighty host shall they be; they shall be a fierce-
faced folk.

But let God's face in the tumult appear, who shakes
the skies,
And they shall vanish together, as a dream of morn-
ing flies.

THE WAR OF 1871

Vents, souffles du zénith obscure et tutélaire

WINDS, airs from distant heaven that covers all,
Have you not some large anger at your call,
High in the frowning skies, to succour us?

Now that you see two peoples coming thus
To blows, because two kings have fallen out;
Now that green fields where lizards run about,
Where the dawn smiles, where crickets bask at noon,
Are at the point to see blind Até soon
Pass, brandishing her arrow-laden hands;
Now that the dried-up streams of stony lands
To-morrow are to run with streams of blood,
While hinds lie cowering in their homes of mud;
Now that, if no one clutches this crowned pair —
Hun and Numidian — suddenly by the hair,
We are to hear, caused by the whims of kings,
The piercing sound of mothers' sorrowings,
Mark the two hosts engage in strife accurst,
And, after mutual hate has done its worst,
The savage victors haste like beasts of prey
Men — brother, husband, son and sire to slay,
While women crossing arms before their breasts
Fly from the embraces of these murderous pests —
Now the gulf yawns to suck two nations in,
Will you do nothing, Winds, to avert this sin?
O you who penetrate the depths of night,
You who disperse yourselves and reunite

Quicker than lightning, as you list, on high,
Dark summoners — across these lands that sigh,
At this last moment, to compose these odds,
Will you not bring, ye Winds, the formidable Gods?

WOODNOTE

Je ne vois pas pourquoi je ferais autre chose

I DO not know any thing left for the doing,
Save to dream beneath trees when the stock-doves are cooing,
And hear the wheels creak, as the waggons roll by:

When the girls carry baskets along to the spring,
They open their ears to the songs that I sing,
As deep in the heart of the frondage I lie:

For the thicket supplies me with flowers beyond counting,
And for me 'tis enough through the shade to send mounting
The song to the hearer, the bird to the sky.

MOONRISE

Quand la lune apparaît dans la brume des plaines

WHEN the moon rises o'er the mist-clad plain,
When the stirred shade resumes its vocal powers,
When evening rustlings, evening airs again
Fill the blurred woodland bowers;

When with his musical bell the ox comes home,
Like some old poet, noble, worn and staid,
Whose accents at the entrance of the tomb
Sound on through deepening shade;

Then let us wander where the valley leads,
Saunter knee-deep in grass with noiseless tread,
And watch the star-strewn vault. 'Tis from these meads
We see the heavens outspread.

Through the green land together let us go,
Mourning for what is reft us. So best blows
The soul-flower, made to bloom by earthly woe
Above the night-blowing rose.

There let us whisper of things infinite,
How all is great, all wise, though all be dim;
Opening our hearts, beneath the azure height,
To catch the sphere-born hymn.

'Tis at this hour stars shine and beauty beams;
Your softer graces shall amaze mine eyes;
Dreaming, let's blend the trouble of our dreams
With quiet of the skies.

The deep calm eve makes but a single prayer
Of all the rumours of the night and day.
Of all the torments of this life of care
Make we but one love-lay.

ANCIENT AND MODERN

A Guernsey Eclogue.

Un journal! Donnez-moi du papier, que j'écrive

The paper! No, the inkstand! let me write
A letter.— Is the postman yet in sight?
How late he is to-day! Wind, fog and rain!
And this is June! Just light the fire again.—
How glum, how peevish looks the country round!
That huge black cloud is very near the ground.
The day lowers heavily; the sky seems low;
And three and three proceed along the Row,
Buttoned up tightly in thick comforters,
Water-befuddled — the Teetotallers!
They are young people, most of them — not yet
Twenty years old; and all the while they let
Betsy and Meg and 'Liza stand and stare,
And gaze on life with puritanic air,
The water they have tippled, I suppose,
In a hymn-tune pours from each droning nose.
There was a time when spring was all divine;
In his cave snored Silenus, full of wine;
Crisp May-day shivered to the touch of Morn;
The magic flute piped to the georgic horn;
Streams leaped, airs gambolled; with a stifled hiss
The wanton adder scared poor Thestylis;
Peacocks in sunshine spread their various eyes,
And the Nine Muses, meteors in the skies,
Swam between earth and cloudland, hovering,
Singing sweet music, in the evening;
The while in every azure space between —
Lamps of the twilight-hour — the stars were seen;
And Virgil seated on the Coelian Hill,
Moschus from Syracuse, the weeping rill,

The flocks, the slumbers under poplars tall,
The woods, the flowers, attendant at their call,
With Amaryllis and Phyllodoce
Joined in their high mysterious ministry.

ROMAN REMAINS

Un monument romain dans ce vieux pré normand

THERE is a ruined Roman monument
In this old Norman meadow. Children come,
Making a jolly din, at sunrise thither;
Driving from Dieppe to Havre, you pass by it.
A shepherd swain who sits by the roadside
Will take you to it, or will follow you
With outstretched hand; the hamlet, not far off,
Smokes through the foliage, and you hear the cocks
Crow in the boughs. "There it is," says the shepherd;
And you see nothing; only stones and bushes.
But if you stoop a little, and look close,
You can distinguish in the grass, where June
Is all aflaunt with insolent gaiety,
Old sculptured frieze-tablets, trophied reliefs,
Tower-bearing monsters, chariots armed with scythes,
Soldiers — no terrors to the swallow-flight —
Besieging some dim fortress in the flowers;
And can discern, wrapped in a shroud of creepers,
Great Cæsar musing sadly and alone,
Grim Dacian profiles charged with hate and scorn,
And shadow, and I know not what beside
That was the Roman Eagle.

WILD AND GARDEN

O poëte! pourquoi tes stances favorites

Poet, why are thy cherished phrases
Still for ever of plucking daisies,
Bindweed ever and cornflowers?
Wherefore under the silent firs
Hard by streams do they take their seat,
Letting over their naked feet
Cress-weed, tress-like, trickle for ever?
Why fields always, and gardens never?
Whence, O dreamer, this uncouth scorn?
Wherefore fly from the turf close shorn,
Gravel walks with their trim box edges,
Star-shaped flower-beds and clipt hedges?

I made answer — I must go hence.
Fancy is routed by gate and fence.
Freedom follows the rough plough-share,
Laughs beneath the liberal air,
Springs upon the uncultured sod.

Man made gardens, the meadows God.

A SIMILE

Qui donc mêle au néant de l'homme vicieux

There are mingled in our clay, though faulty from our birth,
Some splendours of the sky — some virtues of the earth.
Thy hearth, that fires the leafy night afar,
Resembles thee, O man — riddle without reply!

For a spark lives in thine embers, and there gleams on high,
Amid thy smoke, a star.

BIRD AND BABE

Aucune aile ici-bas n'est pour longtemps posée

Nought that has wings can settle here below.
When she was small she had a tame red-breast,
Fed it with dewdrops and with crumbs of bread,
And like an infant's cradle watched its nest.
One evening it escaped. What bitter woe!
She ran to embrace me and be comforted.
Leave, little maidens, leave your birds to fly:
And you, young mothers, watch your children die.

That which God veils we shall find out one day;
It is Heaven's law that nothing should abide.
Well, she grew up. Alas, life flies so fast!
She had one infant, her delight, her pride:
One night — sad fate of things that fade away —
Without one sob or pang, the baby passed.
Leave, little maidens, leave your birds to fly;
And O young mothers, watch your children die!

THE GOLDEN RULE

Si le sort t'a fait riche, aie au bien l'âme prompte

If Heaven have given thee wealth, cherish a mind
Prompt to do good; be humble, patient, kind;
Thy too invidious eminence redeem
By self-abasement; quit thy self-esteem,
Come down, and God shall meet thy soul half way.

Let the poor oxen have their hour of sloth
Who plough the soil for thee. Be ever loath
To waken up too roughly even a slave;
A senator in purple laticlave
Have pity on the poor in disarray.

Serve him who serveth thee. Perchance his lights
May equal thine. Think that he has his rights
As thou thy duties. Treat indulgently
The poor and lowly. Such a master be
As thou thyself would'st glory to obey.

BIRDS AND POETS

Écoutez la voix touchante

If a poet, strangely smiling,
Or a bird of heaven sings
Aught to move thee, hear it, hear it;
Theirs are voices unbeguiling;
Listen, for the bird has wings,
And in bards there breathes a spirit.

When thy head is hot with wine:
While thou mark'st the story told
In thine ears by vanity:
When thou worship'st at the shrine
Of those triple statues cold,
Pleasure, Pride, and Luxury:

While with knitted brows thou trailest
Some ideal in thy train,
Harrowing thine own life-plot:
While instinctively thou halest
Down the common human lane
Some huge lumbering chariot:

While mankind, in gloom or glee,
Do a hundred sorry things
Fit to make us vail our eyes,
Overhead we all may see
Thoughts of poets and birds' wings
Flash together in the skies.

SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare, s'échappant au milieu des huées

Shakespeare emerging from the shouting crowds
Rises, a stormy presence, wrapped in clouds.
The work of this dark poet is, in sooth,
So strongly great in its enormous truth,
So full of giddy heights, of dizzy deeps,
And glowing lights expanding on the steeps,
So fertile in abysses unexplored,
That thinkers for three hundred years have pored
Upon his vastness, viewing with surprise
How every thing to him leads back their eyes,
As to a mountain-peak that towers apart,
Rooted profoundly in the human heart.

TO A FRIEND

L'autre jour, ami cher, ami de vingt années

The other day, dear friend of twenty years,
The while, anticipating better hours,
You pondered on the state, its hopes, its fears,
I watched your babes at play among the flowers.

Of age unequal, but alike most dear,
The elder on the younger smiled with love;

Three innocent maidens, by a day-beam clear
Of your large spirit quickened from above.

Among the opening blossoms bathed in dew
They played, they laughed, a laughter without guile;
Of earthly things that suit with roses two
Are tears of morning, and an infant's smile.

Bright brows where all is glad, where nought is gloom!
With swelling heart I watched them at their play,
I, whose whole life is centred on the tomb
Of my own darling who has passed away.

Cheered by your pleasure I forgot my sorrow;
With soul collected and serene I prayed
God would fulfil your wishes for their morrow;
And from the bottom of my heart I said —

Joy be your portion, friend, in charms like theirs,
In the unfolding of their loveliness!
Upon your threshold, undisturbed by cares,
Their grace, their beauty day by day increase!

This solace is your due; for such as they
Can comfort us at times in life's eclipse;
And from your own renown you turn away
To listen to the music of their lips.

Meeting with praise abroad, at home with love,
A spirit profound, a victor in debate,
'Twixt little children and high duties move
Through truth and right the circles of your fate.

Oh, when your hours are clouded with annoy,
Look onward, onward to the prospect sweet
Of three bright faces, of three springs of joy
Rising to sight, O father, at your feet!

THE REFUGEE

J'ai mené parfois dure vie

I HAVE been leading a life of care,
Grieving, wandering here and there,
An exile, casting an eye of envy
Toward the inscrutable sepulchre;

I have been travelling long afoot,
Marching at night, scared by a hoot,
More overwhelmed with fears and shadows
Than is the heart of the forest brute.

Ye who are worsted in civil stress,
Evil awaits you, succourless.
At evening I have walked through cities
As men traverse a wilderness.

Lonely and friendless, counting o'er
What was left of a dwindling store,
I watched the passers in the twilight
Coming and going evermore.

Splashed by the puddles of the street,
Wearied, stretched on an old park-seat,
I watched the faces through the windows
Kindled to warmth by the fireside heat.

Like Tully leaving each well-known spot,
I went forth, seeking I knew not what;
A foreigner is like a phantom;
The very buildings know him not.

At war with seas, with the seawind,
And shadow in which abides mankind,
At war with man, at war with heaven,
At peace, at peace in my own mind,

Comfort this to my grieving gave;
To mourn is good, to bear is brave;
The treasure house of expectation
Is opened by the key of the grave.

I was assured that come what may,
I was an honest man at bay;
And that the oak trees and rock-ridges
Could not hate me, for what I say.

Round me came, an attendant swarm,
Verse, in many a winged form,
Whirling wildly, with hair dishevelled,
Blown about by the midnight storm.

Past planets, to the flaming sphere
I set my spirit to sing clear;
Only a caitiff need be silent;
Creation should not choose but hear.

I know not what the winds conveyed
In answer to the songs I made.
I supped upon the fruit of brambles
And slept beneath the hazel shade.

THE SPIRIT-WORLD

A l'heure où le soleil se couche

When at eve the sun is sinking,
And I wander in the shade,
Lonely, gloomy, smiling, thinking,
Ranging through the forest glade,

When, the oft-read volumes tossing
In a heap beside the blaze,
One knee o'er the other crossing,
Deaf to all discourse I gaze,

"Does he dream?" you say: "What is it?"
Yes, I dream. Those skies I see,
Which ideal stars revisit,
Looming, lowering over me.

There, within the darksome spaces
Whence the day-beams disappear,
I behold mysterious faces
To my fancy drawing near.

And there greet me revelations —
Voices, phantoms, visions, sighs —
From that world of expectations
Which we nickname memories.

There sepulchral realms before me
Open to the aching sight;
Father, mother, brooding o'er me
In the silence of the night;

And I feel a seraph hover —
Thee, my daughter — near me there,

By the gentle breathing of her,
And the shiver in my hair.

And beneath the homely ceiling,
And behind the haunted tree,
Present only to the feeling,
Spirits fix their gaze on me.

WANDERING

Je ne m'arrête pas, jamais je ne séjourne

Never to halt, never to stand at ease —
When the tide turns, my speechless wayfellow,
To cry to the wind, Forward! and when the breeze
Shifts, to the tide to say — On let us go!

— This is my lot; and the storms evermore
Whirl me along. Love thine own loves, O man!
Sit on the bench of stone beside thy door,
And let thy days finish, as they began.

Happy the home-bred youth, of homely wit,
Who every evening of his life perceives
The self-same bat at the same instant flit
From the same angle of his cottage eaves.

THE EXILE'S RETURN

Tu rentreras comme Voltaire

To thy Paris, like Voltaire,
Full of years again repair;
Midst its beauty, sport and jest
Sojourn, an unwilling guest.

On thy deathbed they will love thee;
As each morning breaks above thee
Murmuring at thy half-closed gate
Some "Already?" some "Not yet!"

Greybeard thou and child at once,
Good enough to seem a dunce,
Think thyself, in honest joy,
Dunce enough to be a boy.

THE UNWORDED AVOWAL

L'énigme ne dit pas son mot

Riddles do not let their answers out.
Golden arrows may inflict a prick
They who feel it will not talk about;
Often, where the branches' shade is thick,

Tender birds have perished, not a few.
You have often said you cared for me,
And I never said as much to you;
Star-lit waters hide their mystery,

Silent lakes beneath the moon conceal
Dreams of heaven in darkness undispelled;
You were lavish of the last appeal,
The supreme avowal I withheld.

Did you deem my silence was to blame?
Speechlessness implies a sinking heart;
But the thrill of pleasure when you came,
Had it not some meaning to impart?

You professed too much, too little I.
Love commences with a shade of grey;
All things have their seasons to be shy;
Nests of birds are flouted by broad day.

Now, this evening — look, the tree-top sways
In the evening breeze, how mournfully!
You forsake me; for you could not gaze
Past my silence, to the soul of me.

Yes, the time is come for us to part.
Hark! the forest moans, how drear the while!
Morn, that finds me weeping for my smart,
Peradventure will behold you smile.

Sweetest words "I love you"— words we ought
Now to cancel, wring my heart to-day.
More than once you said them, without thought;
But I thought them, when I did not say.

THÉRÈSE

Moins de vingt ans et plus de seize

Less than twenty and past sixteen,
That is her age; and therewith say
Her name, Thérèse: quite low, I mean;
And think of heaven at break of day.

What lies hid in her future lot?
What of rapture? What of despair?
She laughs archly, and guesses not,
More than the flower in her hair.

She has auburn ringlets and white arms;
She has little frolicsome feet;
And a clear-flowing streamlet's charms
Are in her aspect, vaguely sweet.

Hers is a soul in rudiments;
A blank leaf, to be filled one day;
A woman in outline, a heart's Contents;
The plot of a drama yet to play.

Innocently she laughs and talks;
Her name-father is the great May-hap.
Every Sunday she takes walks
Arm in arm with a smart young chap.

He is handsome, and she is pert;
Pantin, its window-guards let down
Sees this milliner-Venus flirt
With this Apollo of the town.

Like a swan she plumes her wings;
And her babblement, and her tresses,
And her smile, are just the things
Fit for the silvan wildernesses.

Look at her as she passes by;
You would suppose she "loves a knight,"
To see her gaze, straight at the sky,
With blue eyes, so frank, so bright.

These white goddesses in coarse plaids,
Garret nymphs with features fine,
Have the freedom of fisher-maids,
And the grace of seraphs divine.

They go singing wonderful hymns
  Made up of sunny days and glooms;
And their penury Love trims
  With all the purples of his plumes.

LOVE IN AUTUMN

Garde à jamais dans ta mémoire

Keep evermore with thee,
  Keep without fail
The sweet respect, the memory
  Of our love-tale.

All the whole past comes back
  Before my gaze:
Your footprint, left upon the track
  In dim wood-ways;

The fields, the tufts that edge
  Each green incline,
And your white skirt, caught by the hedge
  Of eglantine.

As if the blooms around
  Said in their play
"We are all glad, now you are found;
  Don't go away!"

I see the branches moved
  In the close cover,
Where we sat musing, you the loved
  With me the lover;

Where to a conqueror's
Your will was wrought;
Where lips of mine touched lips of yours,
Your thought my thought.

Come! for the summer air
Grows warm once more;
Seek we the fresh-trimmed grotto, where
We sat before:

There, at the close of day
When all things rest,
When the leaf bends to embrace the spray,
The wing the nest,

All the old sweets that filled
Our days of bliss,
Yet thrilling with the sight that thrilled
To our first kiss,

The gentle inmates all
Of the deep groves,
Or ever slumber on them fall,
Tell of our loves

Redbreast and missel-thrush
There, as they sing,
Green water-cress and flowering rush
Below the spring,

May-fly with wings of flame,
Zephyr and stream
Whisper for ever your loved name
As in a dream.

Morning and evening both,
Both night and day,
They to themselves our words of troth
Say and re-say.

There, where that troth was plighted,
Come and recline,
My lips to yours again united,
Your heart to mine.

THE JEWELLER'S SHOP

Que fait l'orfèvre? Il achève

What is the goldsmith fashioning?
A mystery — a gipsy ring;
Lit with vague eyes, his workbench seems
A paradise of children's dreams.

The opal shows an eye ball's white;
The turquoise is a look of light:
The fitful fires unceasing blaze
Within the ruby's haggard gaze.

Under the emerald's smooth lid
A bright-browed water-nymph lies hid.
— A lady's eyes I saw at Cette
Were like the sea, but greener yet.

The diamond's enshrouded ray
Faints in the lustre of the day;
Stars by its facets are so glassed,
That into it a star has passed.

The amber is a fossil tear;
The sapphire, shining cold and clear,
Became sky-blue beneath the sod
With dreaming on the skies of God.

A brightness, as of woman's smile,
Enters the goldsmith's shop the while;
The music of her lips keeps time,
As if with wings, to some old rhyme.—

Her speaking looks, her sparkling words,
Are lights, are songs, are humming-birds;
She is so fair, all hearts must quake
And go distracted for her sake.

Whither and whence proceeds she? Nay,
Whence comes the dawn? Where goes the day?
She is a rapture — a love-spark
That lights us, even in the dark.

Out in the street the people gaze
In transport, and bestow their praise,
Upon herself the men-folk, all;
The women, on her cashmere shawl.

A star they call her — fay or queen;
  An angel out of heaven above;
They feel themselves quite full of spleen
  Toward the unknown who has her love.

She is fair, charming, exquisite,
  Giddy and gay; and all the crowd
Lay down their arms without a fight,
  And everybody sighs aloud —

"I would I were" — and therewith names
His loftiest concept of joy;
"A friend of hers!" a youth exclaims;
"Her husband!" says a little boy.

What is this woman? On the whole —
A woman. Such, when limb by limb
God first made man a living soul,
Came next, and laid her spells on him.

She gathers, from the jeweller's store,
All his bright gems enchased in ore;
A fever-fit is in the gold
Her little fairy fingers hold.

She takes the mall, the picaroon,
Aquamarine, like dew in June,
The cameos of Lido's flat,
And the red agates of Surat.

The beryls and the amethysts
She takes, and clasps them on her wrists;
A child-soft laughter from her breaks
At every purchase that she makes.

But the pearl looks at this fair girl —
Why dost thou shrink, thou soft-eyed pearl?
It answers, "I prefer the sea;
It is less deep, less dire than she."

ROSAMUND

Il était une fois

Once on a day
There was a garden, and I saw her there,
My lady Rosamund.
All sweetest birds that fly swarmed in the air;
In shade the greenwood lay.

Once on a day
There was a spring, to which I bent my way
To drink with Rosamund.
White water-nymphs were diving in the stream:
Pearls on their fingers gleam.

Once on a day
There was a kiss, the which all tremblingly
I took from Rosamund.
"Look, there are two of them," a nymph laughed.
"Nay,"
Another answered, "three!"

Once on a day
There was a flower, that from a heart came springing,
The heart of Rosamund.
That is my soul. Darkling I waste away,
Hearing soft voices singing.

GHOST-BALLAD — THE HOLLY-BOUGH

Qui donc êtes-vous, la belle

O and who may you be, fair may?
What do they call you? Tell us now.

There was a maiden here, one day;
Bright eyes were all her bravery.
— That fair maiden am I, quoth she.
Maidens, gather the holly-bough.

You are all dressed in white, fair may;
What may your name be? Tell us now.
Claud made love to her, one fine day;
Great red oxen in stall had he.
— Claud his sweetheart am I, quoth she.
Sweethearts, gather the holly-bough.

You have been gathering flowers, fair may;
What do they call you? Tell us now.
Two made one by a kiss were they;
Winds and hearts are giddy and free.
— Mine was the heart that loved, quoth she.
Lovers, gather the holly-bough.

You have been weeping sore, fair may;
What may your name be? Tell us now.
A babe was born to her — fast and pray!
Jesus took him up on his knee.
— I am the mother, answers she.
Mothers, gather the holly-bough.

You are very pale, fair may;
What do they call you? Tell us now.
Woe-begone she hurried away,
To the caves where screech-owls be.
— That madwoman am I, quoth she.
Madmen, gather the holly-bough.

Cold are you as the grave, fair may;
What may your name be? Tell us now.

Nails in our coffins, as men say,
Are love-fancies and looks of glee.
— She that is dead am I, quoth she.
Mourners, gather the holly-bough.

THE TRIUMPH OF ORDER

Oui, on a sauvé l'ordre et l'état, et je crois

Yes, order and the state are saved once more,
Just as they were, five or six times, before;
The steamer is just starting for Cayenne;
We have been stepping over slaughtered men,
Or wounded, or their graves, for a full week;
We are used to it; justice has been quick;
Men, women, children have been done to death,
Somewhat at random, without taking breath.

As convicts now, swilling the prison mess,
And dressed like convicts in the prison dress,
Live many, who aforetime dug the grave
Of tyranny; whom Volga's, Ebro's wave,
Tagus or Niemen, witnessed, name by name,
Fill the wide air with echoes of their fame.
"Victory"— we have won it thoroughly;
To save the country from the enemy
Paris, five months, was seething with the rage
Of maddened forests, when the winds engage;
Was roaring like a Libyan hurricane;
It needed to be silenced, that was plain.
What a relief! It was a hopeless chance
For one mad city to deliver France;
Germany mutters "Many thanks to you!"
Cafés reopen, and the churches too.
A bleeding peace issues from civic stress;

Now we have order — and one town the less.
Some people might have wished for fewer dead;
But that the foam should fleck a horse's head
After a race — is that a thing for wonder?
Bombs are not more dispassionate than thunder;
In such rude strife we pardon a false blow
To gods above, and demigods below.
In one word, we are saved. From all throats gush
Enthusiastic cheerful shouts of "Hush!"
Nobody is to think, or to complain.
'Tis time the flowing tide should ebb again,
The wholesome air of grave-yards wither all
These stormy liberties that boom and brawl.
Too much of thunder, tempest and clear light
Our age has known; and it is good and right —
We see it now — that a strong saving fist
Should issue from beneath, and grip it by the wrist.
Society so dictates, and is wise;
Religion sways us; our salvation lies
In Right Divine, and in the Syllabus;
The people are at best superfluous.
This is the gist of our great "victory"—
The slacking of a furnace-fire. We see
Our Eighty-nine punished for Ninety-three.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

AUBADE

L'heure sonne, un jour va naître

THE clock is striking; day is breaking;
A cloud moves up the sky;
The swallow in her nest is waking,
The boat is moored hard by.
Love, the master, night and day
Wakes within thy heart;
Let boat, let billow drift away,
But let not love depart.

At times the chiming of the hour
Speaks to the heart that grieves,
Resounding from the old church tower
Through twilight of the leaves.
Fair or foul, the hours must fly;
Never a one may stay;
Darling, let the hour go by;
Let love not pass away.

Is there aught beneath the sun
Unstirred by any breeze?
Bright at times, but often dun,
Are both clouds and seas.
Gone, the cloud! a voyage drear,
Without port or shore.
Let the cloud-wreath disappear!
But let not love unmoor.

Pass the hour — the cloud — the tide!
We too pass away.
Let one thing in us abide
When all things round decay.
From her soft nest on turret high
The bird soars out of sight;
Let the swallow stoop and fly!
But let not love take flight.

ENVY AND AVARICE

L'Avarice et l'Envie

Envy and Avarice, one summer day,
Sauntering abroad
In quest of the abode
Of some poor wretch or fool who lived that way —
You — or myself, perhaps — I cannot say —
Along the road, scarce heeding where it tended,
Their way in sullen, sulky silence wended;
For, though twin sisters, these two charming creatures,
Rivals in hideousness of form and features,
Wasted no love between them as they went.
Pale Avarice,
With gloating eyes,
And back and shoulders almost double bent,
Was hugging close that fatal box
For which she's ever on the watch
Some glance to catch
Suspiciously directed to its locks;
And Envy, too, no doubt with silent winking
At her green, greedy orbs, no single minute
Withdrawn from it, was hard a-thinking
Of all the shining dollars in it.

The only words that Avarice could utter,
Her constant doom, in a low, frightened mutter,
"There's not enough, enough, yet in my store!"
While Envy, as she scanned the glittering sight,
Groaned as she gnashed her yellow teeth with spite,
"She's more than me, more, still forever more!"

Thus, each in her own fashion, as they wandered,
Upon the coffer's precious contents pondered,
When suddenly, to their surprise,
The God Desire stood before their eyes.
Desire, that courteous deity who grants
All wishes, prayers, and wants;
Said he to the two sisters: "Beauteous ladies,
As I'm a gentleman, my task and trade is
To be the slave of your behest —
Choose therefore at your own sweet will and pleasure,
Honours or treasure!
Or in one word, whatever you'd like best.
But, let us understand each other — she
Who speaks the first, her prayer shall certainly
Receive — the other, the same boon *redoubled!*"

Imagine how our amiable pair,
At this proposal, all so frank and fair,
Were mutually troubled!
Misers and enviers, of our human race,
Say, what would you have done in such a case?
Each of the sisters murmured, sad and low:
"What boots it, oh, Desire, to me to have
Crowns, treasures, all the goods that heart can crave,
Or power divine bestow,
Since still another must have always more?"

So each, lest she should speak before
The other, hesitating slow and long
Till the god lost all patience, held her tongue.
He was enraged, in such a way,
To be kept waiting there all day,
With two such beauties in the public road;
Scarce able to be civil even,
He wished them both — well, not in heaven.

Envy at last the silence broke,
And smiling, with malignant sneer,
Upon her sister dear,
Who stood in expectation by,
Ever implacable and cruel, spoke:
"I would be blinded of *one* eye?"

PROMETHEUS AND ORPHEUS

Après une science épuisée et lassée

When knowledge is exhausted and foredone,
Opinion comes, asking "What know we?" One
Passes, repeating what another said;
"Wherefore?" all ask. None guesses what is laid
Behind the screen of heaven — or of hell;
Our exit — or our entrance — who can tell?
Knowledge and will — can they draw back the bar
Of the black labyrinth? Whate'er we are,
Whether we try the dead or living state,
The will itself seems followed hard by fate.
Upward or downward — homeward as we tend —
Which is our goal? At every vista's end
Are gates of silence and phantasmal eyes;

Stooping and shuddering under gloomy skies,
The awe-struck thinker seeks the mystic key
In the stilled horror of a star-shot sea.

And all these thinkers, hanging in suspense
Over the gulf that bounds this world of sense,
To every soul that passes by declare,
As in a dream, the counsels of despair.
"To supplicate is bootless. Spare the cost
Of love, that may be won, that must be lost.
Life is a riddle. Sing or execrate,
As likes thee best, what matters it to fate?
Pride, science, eyes of peacock, eye of lynx,
All fail alike; the image of the sphinx
Borders the fearful avenue of life,
Where man, with nature and himself at strife,
Walks tremblingly, and sees a demon glare
In every deity he names in prayer."

Prometheus sought to issue from this shade,
To finish what the Gods but half-way made,
To toil, to teach, to civilize, and form
Of the whole world one dwelling, bright and warm;
On barren rock and tangled wilderness
To shed the smile of order and redress,
To clear the wild waste places of the earth,
And to give life, where fate had given birth.
He sought to hallow home, to unclose men's eyes,
To set their feet on steps that scale the skies,
To subject nature to a human yoke,
To cover human frailty with a cloak
Made of heaven's blue, broidered with stars; to wake
A soaring spirit in the grovelling snake
That rears its crest and calls itself Mankind;
Evil to chaos among thorns to bind;

To tend a wire of gold from tree to town;
To pull the Gods of human credence down;
To found a temple in the heart of man,
Where reason might complete what he began,
Where hell might evermore be closed on hate,
And law, not Atlas, bear the universal weight.
The Gods have punished him. Forlorn, alone,
Conquered — an awful captive — he lay prone,
Lamented by the daughters of the sea,
Bound, mangled; and his blood was drunk by me.
Now all is death; and in the rayless fields,
Against the bosses of Olympian shields
That sparkle on the heavenly rampart, vain
The efforts both of Giants and of men.
Nevertheless, so long as in the sky
Some trace of air remains, the bird may fly.
Orpheus departing left this parting word:
"Bird that hast wings, wings may upbear the bird.
Bethink thee, will is power; to attain
Is nature's law; the fetters that constrain
Doubtless are there; till they are snapped, they stay;
Yet what Prometheus wrought is wrought; the ray
Is captured; it is extant on the earth;
Somewhere it burns; mankind can give it birth
A second time; can mentally exist;
Can grow to something greater, if they list;
If they but think, weigh, delve, embrace, aspire;
If they preserve the consecrated fire
Never extinguished; if they keep in sight
That the idea, once set aflame, can light
Something within them which is more than they;
That strive they must; that freedom dawns with day;
And that to grasp the torch, when ways are dark,
Is to grasp hope."

Three colours in heaven's arc
Join to make up the day-beam that we see;
Their names are Beauty, Truth, and Energy —

O vulture, in the shoreless night around
Where is the light thou speak'st of to be found?

I looked for a reply; the bird was flown;
Not lessening on the gaze, but seen, and gone;
So comes a withered leaf, so spins, so flies,
Whirled by the breeze the night-hour bids arise,
Opening its gate; when, on the mountain's breast,
The wearied shepherd seats himself to rest.

BENEDICTUS QUI VENIT

Le Bien-aimé, celui que vous attendez, femmes

Women, the Beloved, whom ye look for thus,
He it is who passes — whom we bring with us.
Us he makes partakers in his triumph-ride;
Us the Light permits to follow by his side;
Lo, we bring the Master — the beloved One
On whose face hath shone the splendour of the sun.

Crowned is he with all the majesties above.
Though he wield the thunder, he would rule by love.
Rachel's tears he comforts, Sarah's heart makes light,
Joy is at his left hand, peace upon his right.
He is as a bundle of sweet-smelling myrrh
Carried by the bride between the breasts of her.

With his rod, the day-beam, he dispels the signs
Of that ancient Chaos where the serpent twines.
Like a precious ointment is his name forth-shed;

Heaven is all one hymn of praise above his head;
Alexander's glory, Solomon's high state,
Buried, girt with lilies, was not half so great.

Earth is his domain. Man's spirit owns his sway.
On the blinded soul he comes to pour the day.
He shall cause the dragon to recoil in fear;
He shall change the aspect of this earthly sphere;
Dawn adores him; night before his coming shrinks;
Mòloch in his vastness is dissolved and sinks.

Tigers roaring, she-wolves growling over bones,
War and hate and civic fury slinging stones,
All are hushed at once, if he his finger raise.
When he turns toward heaven his beatific gaze,
Evil he constrains to vanish out of sight.
He is spotless, flawless. He is infinite.

Pharaoh and his chariots are with him as grass;
Nimrod, Ammon, Cyrus — lo, their glories pass.
He is holy; He is king, and more than king;
He goes forth to conquer, and is conquering.
Day beholds his greatness. Darkness hears his fame.
Light is he, and truth, and power. Praise ye his name!

PYRRHO

Et l'oiseau regarda de ses deux yeux mon âme

The two eyes of the bird
Gazed in my very soul, the while I heard;
And I saw night beneath them, as they shone;
And as I mused in silence, he went on:

"There is a veil of darkness on the dead,
Of darkness on the living. I have read
What Hermes writ on his papyrus page:
'Pyrrho the Eleatic was a mage
'Of power; at beholding him, the deep
'Whinnied for very fear; he up the steep
'Of heaven once climbed, God deigning to permit;
'There he saw Truth; God let him compass it;
'As he descended, for descend he must —
'The realms of the ideal ever thrust
'Back on itself the madness of the seer —
'As he descended, passing sphere on sphere,
'Portal on portal downward, bar on bar,
'Carrying Truth, bearing in hand the star,
'Suddenly with a steadfast look he turned
'Toward high heaven his right hand, that burned
'Terrible, dazzling, full of blinding rays;
'And letting from beneath his fingers blaze
'Their lustre forth, the Magian murmured *See,*
'*God, thine own star-beam here I launch at Thee!*
'The brightness shot ev'n to the core of night.
'A moment, God was seen; then all was hid from sight.'"

HUGH DUNDAS

Devant les douze Lords de la Chambre étoilée

Earl Hugh Dundas in the Star Cham
Stood up before his peers.
The lady veiled behind the stair,
She watched him through her tears.

Scutcheons and lights and tapestried hosts
Shone bravely in the gloom.

The Twelve Lords sat like twelve mute ghosts
Inside a catacomb.

The axe gleamed bright, the folk cried Shame;
The soldier and the churl,
They clamoured; nothing could entame
The soul of that stout Earl.

"Your eagle haunts drew rebel sword,
And none of you were far;
What did ye at Cartlane, my lord?
What did ye at Dunbar?"

"I fought for him my hopes prefer,
For standard and for clan.
The eagle is dear to the highlander,
The king to a gentleman."

The judge austere, the tall Dundas,
In hold they said their say.
Happy the knight who dies on grass,
Afield, in open day!

The Court withdrew them from the tower,
The people buzzed within;
The dawn uprose, a virgin flower
Mankind would soil with sin.

The Council-chamber's bolts of brass
Were all at once undone;
Like statues twelve you saw them pass,
The Twelve Lords, one by one.

Slowly the white-haired judge began;
"Sudden and brief our date;

Dundas, who answers not to man,
To God shall answer straight.

"Upon Tower Hill be built this day
A scaffold black and high.
What has your lordship yet to say?
To-morrow night you die."

Then rose a cry, a cry to scare
The judges twelve in place;
And when they looked upon him there,
A smile was on his face.

"So farewell life," he said, and swept
The court a curtesy;
Then turned him where his lady wept —
"Farewell, O love, to thee!"

THE PITY OF THE ANGELS

Un Ange vit un jour

When an angel of kindness
Saw, doomed to the dark,
Men framed in his likeness,
He sought for a spark —
Stray gem of God's glory
That shines so serene —
And, falling like lark,
To brighten our story,
Pure Pity was seen.

MENTANA

TO GARIBALDI

I.

Ces jeunes gens, combien étaient-ils?

YOUNG soldiers of the noble Latin blood,
How many are ye — Boys? Four thousand odd.
How many are there dead? Six hundred: count!
Their limbs lie strewn about the fatal mount,
Blackened and torn, eyes gummed with blood, hearts rolled
Out from their ribs, to give the wolves of the wold
A red feast; nothing of them left but these
Pierced relics, underneath the olive trees,
Show where the gin was sprung — the scoundrel-trap
Which brought those hero-lads their foul mishap.
See how they fell in swathes — like barley-ears!
Their crime? to claim Rome and her glories theirs;
To fight for Right and Honor; — foolish names;
Come — Mothers of the soil! Italian dames!
Turn the dead over! — try your battle luck!
(Bearded or smooth, to her that gave him suck
The man is always child) — Stay, here's a brow
Split by the Zouaves' bullets! This one, now,
With the bright curly hair soaked so in blood,
Was yours, ma donna! — sweet and fair and good.
The spirit sat upon his fearless face
Before they murdered it, in all the grace
Of manhood's dawn. Sisters, here's yours! his lips,

[1] The battle of Mentana, so named from a village by Rome, was fought between the allied French and Papal armies and the Volunteer Forces of Garibaldi, Nov. 3rd, 1867.

Over whose bloom the bloody death-foam slips,
Lisped house-songs after you, and said your name
In loving prattle once. That hand, the same
Which lies so cold over the eyelids shut,
Was once a small pink baby-fist, and wet
With milk beads from thy yearning breasts.

Take thou
Thine eldest,— thou, thy youngest born. Oh, flow
Of tears never to cease! Oh, Hope quite gone,
Dead like the dead — Yet could they live alone —
Without their Tiber and their Rome? and be
Young and Italian — and not also free?
They longed to see the ancient eagle try
His lordly pinions in a modern sky.
They bore — each on himself — the insults laid
On the dear foster-land: of nought afraid,
Save of not finding foes enough to dare
For Italy. Ah, gallant, free, and rare
Young martyrs of a sacred cause,— Adieu!
No more of life — no more of love — for you!
No sweet long-straying in the star-lit glades
At Ave-Mary, with the Italian maids;
No welcome home!

II.

This Garibaldi now, the Italian boys
Go mad to hear him — take to dying — take
To passion for "the pure and high;"— God's sake!
It's monstrous, horrible! One sees quite clear
Society — our charge — must shake with fear
And shriek for help, and call on us to act
When there's a hero, taken in the fact.
If Light shines in the dark, there's guilt in that!
What's viler than a lantern to a bat?

III.

Your Garibaldi missed the mark! You see
The end of life's to cheat, and not to be
Cheated: The knave is nobler than the fool!
Get all you can and keep it! Life's a pool,
The best luck wins; if Virtue starves in rags,
I laugh at Virtue; here's my money-bags!
Here's righteous metal! We have kings, I say
To keep cash going, and the game at play;
There's why a king wants money — he'd be missed
Without a fertilizing civil list.

Do but try
The question with a steady moral eye!
The colonel strives to be a brigadier,
The marshal, constable. Call the game fair,
And pay your winners! Show the trump, I say!
A renegade's a rascal — till the day
They make him Pasha: is he rascal then?
What with these sequins? Bah! you speak to Men,
And Men want money — power — luck — life's joy —
Those take who can: we could, and fobbed Savoy;
For those who live content with honest state,
They're public pests; knock we 'em on the pate!
They set a vile example! Quick — arrest
That Fool, who ruled and failed to line his nest.
Just hit a bell, you'll see the clapper shake —
Meddle with Priests, you'll find the barrack wake —
Ah! Princes know the People's a tight boot,
March 'em sometimes to be shot and to shoot,
Then they'll wear easier. So let them preach
The righteousness of howitzers; and teach
At the fag end of prayer: "Now, slit their throats!

My holy Zouaves! my good yellow-coats!"
We like to see the Holy Father send
Powder and steel and lead without an end,
To feed Death fat; and broken battles mend.
So they!

IV.

But thou, our Hero, baffled, foiled,
The Glorious Chief who vainly bled and toiled.
The trust of all the Peoples — Freedom's Knight!
The Paladin unstained — the Sword of Right!
What wilt thou do, whose land finds thee but gaols!
The banished claim the banished! deign to cheer
The refuge of the homeless — enter here,
And light upon our households dark will fall
Even as thou enterest. Oh, Brother, all,
Each one of us — hurt with thy sorrows' proof,
Will make a country for thee of his roof.
Come, sit with those who live as exiles learn:
Come! Thou whom kings could conquer but not yet turn.
We'll talk of "Palermo"[1]—"the Thousand" true,
Will tell the tears of blood of France to you;
Then by his own great Sea we'll read, together,
Old Homer in the quiet summer weather,
And after, thou shalt go to thy desire
While that faint star of Justice grows to fire.[2]

[1] Palermo was taken immediately after the Garibaldian volunteers, 1,000 strong, landed at Marsala to inaugurate the rising which made Italy free.

[2] Both poet and his idol lived to see the French Republic for the fourth time proclaimed. When Hugo rose in the Senate, on the first occasion after his return to Paris after the expulsion of the Napoleons, and his white head was seen above that of Rouher, ex-Prime Minister of the Empire, all the house shuddered, and in a nearly unanimous voice voice shouted: "The judgment of God! expiation!"

V.

Oh, Italy! hail your Deliverer,
Oh, Nations! almost he gave Rome to her!
Strong-arm and prophet-heart had all but come
To win the city, and to make it "Rome."
Calm, of the antique grandeur, ripe to be
Named with the noblest of her history.
He would have Romanized your Rome — controlled
Her glory, lordships, Gods, in a new mould.
Her spirits' fervour would have melted in
The hundred cities with her; made a twin
Vesuvius and the Capitol; and blended
Strong Juvenal's with the soul, tender and splendid,
Of Dante — smelted old with new alloy —
Stormed at the Titans' road full of bold joy
Whereby men storm Olympus. Italy,
Weep! — This man could have made one Rome of thee!

VI.

But the crime's wrought! Who wrought it?
Honest Man —
Priest Pius? No! Each does but what he can.
Yonder's the criminal! The warlike wight
Who hides behind the ranks of France to fight,
Greek Sinon's blood crossed thick with Judas-Jew's,
The Traitor who with smile which true men woos,
Lip mouthing pledges — hand grasping the knife —
Waylaid French Liberty, and took her life.
Kings, he is of you! fit companion! one
Whom day by day the lightning looks upon
Keen; while the sentenced man triples his guard
And trembles; for his hour approaches hard.
Ye ask me "when?" I say *soon!* Hear ye not

Yon muttering in the skies above the spot?
Mark ye no coming shadow, Kings? the shroud
Of a great storm driving the thunder-cloud?
Hark! like the thief-catcher who pulls the pin,
God's thunder asks *to speak to one within!*

VII.

And meanwhile this death-odour — this corpse-scent
Which makes the priestly incense redolent
Of rotting men, and the Te Deums stink —
Reeks through the forests — past the river's brink,
O'er wood and plain and mountain, till it fouls
Fair Paris in her pleasures; then it prowls,
A deadly stench, to Crete, to Mexico,
To Poland — wheresoe'er kings' armies go:
And Earth one Upas-tree of bitter sadness,
Opening vast blossoms of a bloody madness.
Throats cut by thousands — slain men by the ton!
Earth quite corpse-cumbered, though the half not done!
They lie, stretched out, where the blood-puddles soak,
Their black lips gaping with the last cry spoke.
"Stretched;" nay *sown broadcast;* yes, the word is "sown."
The fallows Liberty — the harsh wind blown
Over the furrows, Fate: and these stark dead
Are grain sublime, from Death's cold fingers shed
To make the Abyss conceive: the Future bear
More noble Heroes! Swell, oh, Corpses dear!
Rot quick to the green blade of Freedom! Death!
Do thy kind will with them! They without breath,
Stripped, scattered, ragged, festering, slashed and blue,

Dangle towards God the arms French shot tore through
And wait in meekness, Death! for Him and You!

VIII.

Oh, France! oh, People! sleeping unabashed!
Liest thou like a hound when it was lashed?
Thou liest! thine own blood fouling both thy hands,
And on thy limbs the rust of iron bands,
And round thy wrists the cut where cords went deep.
Say did they numb thy soul, that thou didst sleep?
Alas! sad France is grown a cave for sleeping,
Which a worse night than Midnight holds in keeping,
Thou sleepest sottish — lost to life and fame —
While the stars stare on thee, and pale for shame.
Stir! rouse thee! Sit! if thou know'st not to rise;
Sit up, thou tortured sluggard! ope thine eyes!
Stretch thy brawn, Giant! Sleep is foul and vile!
Art fagged, art deaf, art dumb? art blind this while?
They lie who say so! Thou dost know and feel
The things they do to thee and thine. The heel
That scratched thy neck in passing — whose? Canst say?
Yes, yes, 'twas *his,* and this is his *fête-day.*
Oh, thou that wert of humankind — couched so —
A beast of burden on this dunghill! oh!
Bray to them, Mule! Oh, Bullock! bellow then!
Since they have made thee blind, grope in thy den!
Do something, Outcast One, that wast so grand!
Who knows if thou putt'st forth thy poor maimed hand,
There may be venging weapon within reach!

Feel with both hands — with both huge arms go
stretch
Along the black wall of thy cellar. Nay,
There *may* be some odd thing hidden away?
Who knows — there *may!* Those great hands might
so come
In course of ghastly fumble through the gloom,
Upon a sword — a *sword!* The hands once clasp
Its hilt, must wield it with a Victor's grasp.

SONG OF BIRDS

Vie! O bonheur! Bois profonds

Life — what rapture! Life at ease
Among tall trees,
By unwearying impulse stirred!
Soar we high o'er earth and water!
From the matter
Of men's souls is made the bird.

Live we — sing we! All is bright
In heaven's light;
All is radiant in the day;
Night and morn, all creatures tend
Toward their end;
Streamlets wind, but do not stray.

Joyful smiles the country-side
Far and wide;
Spirits dance on every bough;
Voices murmur on, above,
"Live and love";
Blossoms whisper "Pluck us now."

Rose of dawn and gold of day
Sow alway
Everywhere their opal fires.
Birds are not an orphaned race;
Every place
One mysterious mind inspires.

One unseen by mortal eye
Sojourns nigh
In his dwelling known of none;
And his influence hath blest
Our warm nest,
And his window is the sun.

It is of his ordering
That our wing
Never fails us, best or worst;
That the doves upon the hills
Drink at rills
Where the wild goats quench their thirst.

Thanks to him, the wood-peckers,
Whom grey firs
Hail as guardians, wander free;
And deliver from the ants
Their loved haunts,
Cedar-tree and maple-tree.

Thanks to him, to poplars tall
Sparrows all
From low elder-scrub take wing;
'Tis his providence that makes
Thick the brakes,
There to sleep and there to sing.

He it is who in green boughs
Bids us house,
Goldfinch, wagtail, humming-bird;
All the tribes whom air delights;
Who on heights
Of blue ether sing unheard.

He to whom our names are known
Guides his own.
What care we what means our song?
In our untaught low estate
We are great;
In our weakness we are strong.

Tempests, driving all to flee,
Setting free
Thunder, water-spout and hail,
Lashing, howsoever it rave,
Ocean's wave,
Break against our feathers frail.

He is good. The summer heat
Makes he sweet;
Sweet the rowan-berries red;
By his goodness no one comes
Near our homes,
But dry leaves bewray his tread.

Love, that waited for his word,
Spake, and stirred
Into harmonies divine
All the creatures of the field;
He revealed
In their instincts his design.

Life! It is the master-spell
None can quell,
Boundless, endless, numberless;
Gentle, inexhaustible;
Filling full
Earth in all her dreariness.

Let us fly and fly and fly!
Furrows lie
Side by side; the hills are green;
Life is there, before our eyes
In blue skies
Clear and open to be seen.

Swallow, come and build thy nest;
Granite crest
Lends thee shade and ivy leaves;
Take the roof of palace-tower
For thy bower,
Take thy straw from cottage-eaves.

Tiny nest, by swallows all
Built so small,
Thou art full of mystery;
Tiny egg, from its due curve
The world would swerve,
Were the woods despoiled of thee.

LIFE

Let us be like a bird, one instant lighted
Upon a twig that swings;
He feels it yield — but sings on, unaffrighted,
Knowing he hath his wings!

FREEDOM AND THE WORLD

Le peuple est petit

(Inscription under a Statue of the Virgin and Child, at Guernsey.— The poet sees in the emblem a modern Atlas, i. e. Freedom supporting the World.)

WEAK is the People — but will grow beyond all other
Within thy holy arms, thou fruitful victor-mother!
O Liberty, whose conquering flag is never furled —
Thou bearest Him in whom is centred all the World.

THE BLIND BEGGAR AND THE POET

[Victor Hugo, meeting a blind beggar led by a little girl, wrote on a board which the old man had hung round his neck, four lines, of which the following is a translation.]

LIKE Belisarius, and like Homer, blind,
By one weak child, sole guide and guardian led,
Alms by your hands to suffering age consigned
He cannot see — God sees them in his stead.

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